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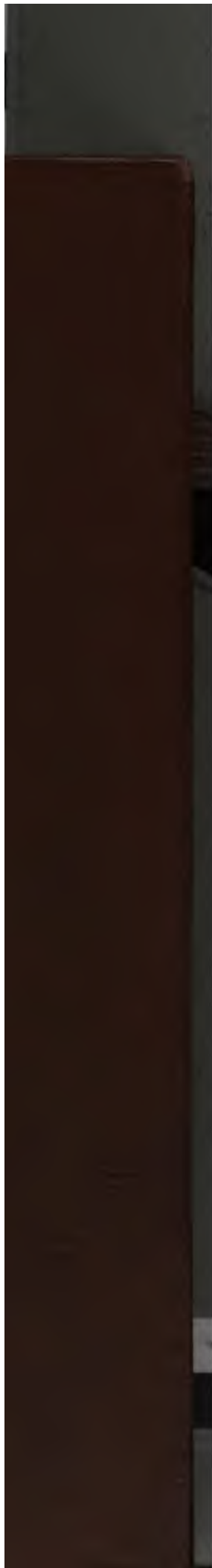
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What's new.

THE
P R O S E W O R K S

OF
MRS. ELLIS,
D.C.

AUTHOR OF
"THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND," "THE POETRY OF LIFE," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:
HENRY G. LANGLEY, 8 ASTOR HOUSE.

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FRANCE

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VOL. I.

THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND.

THE DAUGHTERS OF ENGLAND.

THE WIVES OF ENGLAND.

THE MOTHERS OF ENGLAND.

THE
WOMEN OF ENGLAND:

THEIR
SOCIAL DUTIES, AND DOMESTIC HABITS.

BY MRS. ELLIS,
AUTHOR OF "THE POETRY OF LIFE," "PICTURES OF PRIVATE LIFE," ETC. ETC

UNIFORM EDITION,
COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

NEW-YORK:
HENRY G. LANGLEY, 8 ASTOR HOUSE.
1844.

PREFACE.

At a time when the pressure of stirring events, and the urgency of public and private interests, render it increasingly desirable that every variety of labor should be attended with an immediate and adequate return; I feel that some apology is necessary for the presumption of inviting the attention of the public to a work, in which I have been compelled to enter into the apparently insignificant detail of familiar and ordinary life.

The often-repeated truth—that “trifles make the sum of human things,” must plead my excuse; as well as the fact, that while our libraries are stored with books of excellent advice on general conduct, we have no single work containing the particular minutiae of practical duty, to which I have felt myself called upon to invite the consideration of the young women of the present day. We have many valuable dissertations upon female character, as exhibited on the broad scale of virtue; but no direct definition of those minor parts of domestic and social intercourse, which strengthen into habit, and consequently form the basis of moral character.

It is worthy of remark, also, that these writers have addressed their observations almost exclusively to *ladies*, or occasionally to those who hold a subordinate situation under the influence of ladies; while that estimable class of females who might be more specifically denominated *women*, and who yet enjoy the privilege of liberal education, with exemption from the pecuniary necessities of labor, are almost wholly overlooked.

It is from a high estimate of the importance of this class in upholding the moral worth of our country, that I have addressed my remarks especially to them; and in order to do so with more effect, I have ventured to penetrate into the familiar scenes of domestic life, and have thus endeavored to lay bare some of the causes which frequently lie hidden at the root of general conduct.

Had I not known before the commencement of this work, its progress would soon have convinced me, that in order to perform my task with candor and faithfulness, I must renounce all idea of what is called fine writing; because the very nature of the duty I have undertaken, restricts me to the consideration of subjects, too minute in themselves, to admit of their being expatiated upon with eloquence by the writer—too familiar to produce upon the reader any startling effect. Had I even felt within myself a capability for treating any subject in this manner, I should have been willing in this instance to resign all opportunity of such display, if, by so doing, I could more clearly point out to my countrywomen, by what means they may best meet that pressing exigency of the times, which so urgently demands a fresh exercise of moral power on their part, to win back to the homes of England the boasted felicity for which they once were famed.

Anxious as I am to avoid the charge of unnecessary trifling on a subject so serious as the moral worth of the women of England, there is beyond this a consideration of far higher importance, to which

I would invite the candid attention of the serious part of the public, while I offer, what appears to me a sufficient apology, for having written a book on the subject of morals, without having made it strictly religious. I should be sorry indeed, if, by so doing, I brought upon myself the suspicion of yielding for one moment to the belief that there is any other sure foundation for good morals, than correct religious principle; but I do believe, that, with the Divine blessing, a foundation may be laid in early life, before the heart has been illuminated by Divine truth, or has experienced its renovating power, for those domestic habits, and relative duties, which in after life will materially assist the development of the Christian character. And I am the more convinced of this, because we sometimes see, in sincere and devoted Christians, such peculiarities of conduct as materially hinder their usefulness—such early-formed habits, as they themselves would be glad to escape from, but which continue to cling around them in their earthly course, like the clustering of weeds in the traveller's path.

It may perhaps more fully illustrate my view of this important subject to say, that those who would train up young people without the cultivation of moral habits, trusting solely to the *future* influence of religion upon their hearts, are like

mariners, who, while they wait for their bark to be safely guided out to sea, allow their sails to swing idly in the wind, their cordage to become entangled, and the general outfit of their vessel to suffer injury and decay; so that when the pilot comes on board they lose much of the advantage of his services, and fail to derive the anticipated benefit from his presence.

All that I would venture to recommend with regard to morals, is, that the order and right government of the vessel should, as far as is possible, be maintained, so that when the hope of better and surer guidance is realized, and the heavenly Pilot in his own good time arrives, all things may be ready—nothing out of order, and nothing wanting, for a safe and prosperous voyage.

It is therefore solely to the cultivation of *habits* that I have confined my attention—to the *minor morals of domestic life*. And I have done this, because there are so many abler pens than mine employed in teaching and enforcing the essential truths of religion; because there is an evident tendency in society, as it exists in the present day, to overlook these minor points; and because it is impossible for them to be neglected, without serious injury to the Christian character.

SARAH STICKNEY ELLIS.

PENTONVILLE, Nov. 1838.

THE
WOMEN OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND.

EVERY country has its peculiar characteristics, not only of climate and scenery, of public institutions, government, and laws; but every country has also its *moral characteristics*, upon which is founded its true title to a station, either high or low, in the scale of nations.

The national characteristics of England are the perpetual boast of her patriotic sons; and there is one especially which it behooves all British subjects not only to exult in, but to cherish and maintain. Leaving the justice of her laws, the extent of her commerce, and the amount of her resources, to the orator, the statesman, and the political economist, there yet remains one of the noblest features in her national character, which may not improperly be regarded as within the compass of a woman's understanding, and the province of a woman's pen. It is the domestic character of England—the home comforts, and fireside virtues for which she is so justly celebrated. These I hope to be able to speak of without presumption, as intimately associated with, and dependent upon, the moral feelings and habits of the women of this favored country.

It is therefore in reference to these alone that I shall endeavor to treat the subject of England's nationality; and in order to do this with more precision, it is necessary to draw the line of observation within a narrower circle, and to describe what are the characteristics of the women of England. I ought, perhaps, in strict propriety, to say

what *were* their characteristics; because I would justify the obtrusiveness of a work like this by first premising that the women of England are deteriorating in their moral character, and that false notions of refinement are rendering them less influential, less useful, and less happy than they were.

In speaking of what English women were, I would not be understood to refer to what they were a century ago. Facilities in the way of mental improvement have greatly increased during this period. In connection with moral discipline, these facilities are invaluable; but I consider the two excellences as having been combined in the greatest perfection in the general average of women who have now attained to middle, or rather advanced age. When the cultivation of the mental faculties had so far advanced as to take precedence of the moral, by leaving no time for domestic usefulness, and the practice of personal exertion in the way of promoting general happiness, the character of the women of England assumed a different aspect, which is now beginning to tell upon society in the sickly sensibilities, the feeble frames, and the useless habits of the rising generation.

In stating this humiliating fact, I must be blind indeed to the most cheering aspect of modern society, not to perceive that there are signal instances of women who carry about with them into every sphere of domestic duty, even the most humble and obscure, the accomplishments and refinements of modern education; and who deem it rather an honor than a degradation to be permitted to add to the sum of human happiness, by diffusing the embellishments of mind and man-

ners over the homely and familiar aspect of every-day existence.

Such, however, do not constitute the majority of the female population of Great Britain. By far the greater portion of the young ladies (for they are no longer *women*) of the present day, are distinguished by a morbid listlessness of mind and body, except when under the influence of stimulus, a constant pining for excitement, and an eagerness to escape from every thing like practical and individual duty. Of course, I speak of those whose minds are not under the influence of religious principle. Would that the exception could extend to all who *profess* to be governed by this principle!

Gentle, inoffensive, delicate, and passively amiable as many young ladies are, it seems an ungracious task to attempt to rouse them from their summer dream; and were it not that wintry days will come, and the surface of life be ruffled, and the mariner, even she who steers the smallest bark, be put upon the inquiry for what port she is really bound—were it not that the cry of utter helplessness is of no avail in rescuing from the waters of affliction, and the plea of ignorance unheard upon the far-extending and deep ocean of experience, and the question of accountability perpetually sounding, like the voice of a warning spirit, above the storms and the billows of this lower world—I would be one of the very last to call the dreamer back to a consciousness of present things. But this state of listless indifference, my sisters, must not be. You have deep responsibilities; you have urgent claims; a nation's moral worth is in your keeping. Let us inquire then in what way it may be best preserved. Let us consider what you are, and have been, and by what peculiarities of feeling and habit you have been able to throw so much additional weight into the scale of your country's worth.

In order to speak with precision of the characteristics of any class of people, it is necessary to confine our attention as much as possible to that portion of the class where such characteristics are most prominent;

and, avoiding the two extremes where circumstances not peculiar to that class are supposed to operate, to take the middle or intervening portion as a specimen of the whole.

Napoleon Bonaparte was accustomed to speak of the English nation as a "nation of shopkeepers;" and when we consider the number, the influence, and the respectability of that portion of the inhabitants who are, directly or indirectly, connected with our trade and merchandise, it does indeed appear to constitute the *mass* of English society, and may justly be considered as exhibiting the most striking and unequivocal proofs of what are the peculiar characteristics of the people of England. It is not therefore from the aristocracy of the land that the characteristics of English women should be taken; because the higher the rank, and the greater the facilities of communication with other countries, the more prevalent are foreign manners, and modes of thinking and acting common to that class of society in other countries. Neither is it entirely among the indigent and most laborious of the community, that we can with propriety look for those strong features of nationality, which stamp the moral character of different nations; because the urgency of mere physical wants, and the pressure of constant and necessary labor, naturally induce a certain degree of resemblance in social feelings and domestic habits, among people similarly circumstanced, to whatever country they may belong.

In looking around, then, upon our "nation of shopkeepers," we readily perceive that by dividing society into three classes, as regards what is commonly called rank, the middle class must include so vast a portion of the intelligence and moral power of the country at large, that it may not improperly be designated the pillar of our nation's strength, its base being the important class of the laborious poor, and its rich and highly ornamental capital, the ancient nobility of the land. In no other country is society thus beautifully proportioned, and England should beware of any

deviation from the order and symmetry of her national column.

There never was a more short-sighted view of society, than that by which the women of our country have lately learned to look with envious eyes upon their superiors in rank, to rival their attainments, to imitate their manners, and to pine for the luxuries they enjoy; and consequently to look down with contempt upon the appliances and means of humbler happiness. The women of England were once better satisfied with that instrumentality of Divine wisdom by which they were placed in their proper sphere. They were satisfied to do with their own hands what they now leave undone, or repine that they cannot have others to do for them.

A system of philosophy was once promulgated in France, by which it was attempted to be proved that so much of the power and the cleverness of man was attributable to his hand, that but for a slight difference in the formation of this organ in some of the inferior animals, they would have been entitled to rank in the same class with him. Whatever may be said of the capabilities of man's hand, I believe the feminine qualification of being able to use the hand willingly and well, has a great deal to do with the moral influence of woman. The personal services she is thus enabled to render, enhance her value in the domestic circle, and when such services are performed with the energy of a sound understanding, and the grace of an accomplished mind—above all, with the disinterested kindness of a generous heart—they not only dignify the performer, but confer happiness, as well as obligation. Indeed, so great is the charm of personal attentions arising spontaneously from the heart, that women of the highest rank in society, and far removed from the necessity of individual exertion, are frequently observed to adopt habits of personal kindness towards others, not only as the surest means of giving pleasure, but as a natural and grateful relief to the overflowings of their own affections.

There is a principle in woman's love, that

renders it impossible for her to be satisfied without actually *doing* something for the object of her regard. I speak only of woman in her refined and elevated character. Vanity can satiate itself with admiration, and selfishness can feed upon services received; but woman's love is an overflowing and inexhaustible fountain, that must be perpetually imparting from the source of its own blessedness. It needs but slight experience to know, that the mere act of loving our fellow-creatures does little towards the promotion of their happiness. The human heart is not so credulous as to continue to believe in affection without practical proof. Thus the interchange of mutual kind offices begets a confidence which cannot be made to grow out of any other foundation; and while gratitude is added to the connecting link, the character on each side is strengthened by the personal energy required for the performance of every duty.

There may exist great sympathy, kindness, and benevolence of feeling, without the power of bringing any of these emotions into exercise for the benefit of others. They exist as emotions only. And thus the means which appear to us as the most gracious and benignant of any that could have been adopted by our heavenly Father for rousing us into necessary exertion, are permitted to die away, fruitless and unproductive, in the breast, where they ought to have operated as a blessing and means of happiness to others.

It is not uncommon to find negatively amiable individuals, who sink under a weight of indolence, and suffer from innate selfishness a gradual contraction of mind, perpetually lamenting their own inability to do good. It would be ungenerous to doubt their sincerity in these regrets. We therefore only conclude that the want of habits of personal usefulness has rendered them mentally imbecile, and physically inert; whereas, had the same individuals been early accustomed to bodily exertion, promptly and cheerfully performed on the spur of the moment, without waiting to question whether it was agreeable or not, the very act of exertion would

have become a pleasure, and the benevolent purpose to which such exertions might be applied, a source of the highest enjoyment.

Time was when the women of England were accustomed, almost from their childhood, to the constant employment of their hands. It might be sometimes in elaborate works of fancy, now ridiculed for their want of taste, and still more frequently in household avocations, now fallen into disuse from their incompatibility with modern refinement. I cannot speak with unqualified praise of all the *objects* on which they bestowed their attention; but, if it were possible, I would write in characters of gold the indisputable fact, that the *habits* of industry and personal exertion thus acquired, gave them a strength and dignity of character, a power of usefulness, and a capability of doing good, which the higher theories of modern education fail to impart. They were in some instances less qualified for travelling on the continent without an interpreter, but the women of whom I am speaking seldom went abroad. Their sphere of action was at their own firesides, and the world in which they moved was one where pleasure of the highest, purest order, naturally and necessarily arises out of acts of duty faithfully performed.

Perhaps it may be necessary to be more specific in describing the class of women to which this work relates. It is, then, strictly speaking, to those who belong to that great mass of the population of England which is connected with trade and manufactures;—or, in order to make the application more direct, to that portion of it who are restricted to the services of from one to four domestics,—who, on the one hand, enjoy the advantages of a liberal education, and, on the other, have no pretension to family rank. It is, however, impossible but that many deviations from these lines of demarkation must occur, in consequence of the great change in their pecuniary circumstances, which many families during a short period experience, and the indefinite order of rank and station in which the elegances of life are enjoyed, or its privations endured. There is also this

peculiarity to be taken into account, in our view of English society, that the acquisition of wealth, with the advantages it procures, is all that is necessary for advancement to aristocratic dignity; while, on the other hand, so completely is the nation dependent upon her commercial resources, that it is no uncommon thing to see individuals who lately ranked among the aristocracy, suddenly driven, by the failure of some bank or some mercantile speculation, into the lowest walks of life, and compelled to mingle with the laborious poor.

These facts are strong evidence in favor of a system of conduct that would enable all women to sink gracefully, and without murmuring against Providence, into a lower grade of society. It is easy to learn to enjoy, but it is not easy to learn to suffer.

Any woman of respectable education, possessing a well-regulated mind, might move with ease and dignity into a higher sphere than that to which she had been accustomed; but few women whose hands have been idle all their lives, can feel themselves compelled to do the necessary labor of a household, without a feeling of indescribable hardship, too frequently productive of a secret murmuring against the instrumentality by which she was reduced to such a lot.

It is from the class of females above described, that we naturally look for the highest tone of moral feeling, because they are at the same time removed from the pressing necessities of absolute poverty, and admitted to the intellectual privileges of the great; and thus, while they enjoy every facility in the way of acquiring knowledge, it is their still higher privilege not to be exempt from the domestic duties which call forth the best energies of the female character.

Where domestics abound, and there is a *hired* hand for every kindly office, it would be a work of supererogation for the mistress of the house to step forward, and assist with her own; but where domestics are few, and the individuals who compose the household are thrown upon the consideration of the mothers, wives, and daughters for their daily

comfort, innumerable channels are opened for the overflow of those floods of human kindness, which it is one of the happiest and most ennobling duties of woman to administer to the weary frame, and to pour into the wounded mind.

It is perhaps the nearest approach we can make towards any thing like a definition of what is most striking in the characteristics of the women of England, to say, that the nature of their domestic circumstances is such as to invest their characters with the threefold recommendation of *promptitude in action, energy of thought, and benevolence of feeling*. With all the responsibilities of family comfort and social enjoyment resting upon them, and unaided by those troops of menials who throng the halls of the affluent and the great, they are kept alive to the necessity of making their own personal exertions conducive to the great end of promoting the happiness of those around them. They cannot sink into supineness, or suffer any of their daily duties to be neglected, but some beloved member of the household is made to feel the consequences, by enduring inconveniences which it is alike their pride and their pleasure to remove. The frequently recurring avocations of domestic life admit of no delay. When the performance of any kindly office has to be asked for, solicited, and re-solicited, it loses more than half its charm. It is therefore strictly in keeping with the fine tone of an elevated character to be beforehand with expectation, and thus to show, by the most delicate yet most effectual of all human means, that the object of attention, even when unheard and unseen, has been the subject of kind and affectionate solicitude.

By experience in these apparently minute affairs, a woman of kindly feeling and properly disciplined mind, soon learns to regulate her actions also according to the principles of true wisdom, and hence arises that energy of thought for which the women of England are so peculiarly distinguished. Every passing event, however insignificant to the eye of the world, has its crisis, every occurrence its emergency, every cause its

effect; and upon these she has to calculate with precision, or the machinery of household comfort is arrested in its movements, and thrown into disorder.

Woman, however, would but ill supply the place appointed her by Providence, were she endowed with no other faculties than those of promptitude in action and energy of thought. Valuable as these may be, they would render her but a cold and cheerless companion, without the kindly affections and tender offices that sweeten human life. It is a high privilege, then, which the women of England enjoy, to be necessarily, and by the force of circumstances, thrown upon their affections, for the rule of their conduct in daily life. "What shall I do to gratify myself—to be admired—or to vary the tenor of my existence?" are not the questions which a woman of right feelings asks on first awaking to the avocations of the day. Much more congenial to the highest attributes of woman's character, are inquiries such as these: "How shall I endeavor through this day to turn the time, the health, and the means permitted me to enjoy, to the best account?—Is any one sick? I must visit their chamber without delay, and try to give their apartment an air of comfort, by arranging such things as the wearied nurse may not have thought of. Is any one about to set off on a journey? I must see that the early meal is spread, or prepare it with my own hands, in order that the servant, who was working late last night, may profit by unbroken rest. Did I fail in what was kind or considerate to any of the family yesterday? I will meet her this morning with a cordial welcome, and show, in the most delicate way I can, that I am anxious to atone for the past. Was any one exhausted by the last day's exertion? I will be an hour before them this morning, and let them see that their labor is so much in advance. Or, if nothing extraordinary occurs to claim my attention, I will meet the family with a consciousness that, being the least engaged of any member of it, I am consequently the most at liberty to devote myself to the general good of the whole, by cultiva-

ting cheerful conversation, adapting myself to the prevailing tone of feeling, and leading those who are least happy, to think and speak of what will make them more so."

Who can believe that days, months, and years spent in a continual course of thought and action similar to this, will not produce a powerful effect upon the character, and not only upon the individual who thinks and acts alone, but upon all to whom her influence extends? In short, the customs of English society have so constituted women the guardians of the comfort of their homes, that, like the Vestals of old, they cannot allow the lamp they cherish to be extinguished, or to fail for want of oil, without an equal share of degradation attaching to their names.

In other countries, where the domestic lamp is voluntarily put out, in order to allow the women to resort to the opera, or the public festival, they are not only careless about their home comforts, but necessarily ignorant of the high degree of excellence to which they might be raised. In England there is a kind of science of good household management, which, if it consisted merely in keeping the house respectable in its physical character, might be left to the effectual working out of hired hands; but, happily for the women of England, there is a philosophy in this science, by which all their highest and best feelings are called into exercise. Not only must the house be neat and clean, but it must be so ordered as to suit the tastes of all, as far as may be, without annoyance or offence to any. Not only must a constant system of activity be established, but peace must be preserved, or happiness will be destroyed. Not only must elegance be called in, to adorn and beautify the whole, but strict integrity must be maintained by the minutest calculation as to lawful means, and self, and self-gratification, must be made the yielding point in every disputed case. Not only must an appearance of outward order and comfort be kept up, but around every domestic scene there must be a strong wall of confidence, which no internal suspicion can undermine, no external enemy break through.

Good household management conducted on this plan, is indeed a science well worthy of attention. It comprises so much, as to invest it with an air of difficulty on the first view; but no woman can reasonably complain of incapability, because nature has endowed the sex with perceptions so lively and acute, that where benevolence is the impulse, and principle the foundation upon which they act, experience will soon teach them by what means they may best accomplish the end they have in view.

They will soon learn by experience, that selfishness produces selfishness, that indolence increases with every hour of indulgence, that what is left undone because it is difficult to-day, will be doubly difficult to-morrow; that kindness and compassion, to answer any desirable end, must one be practicable, the other delicate, in its nature; that affection must be kept alive by ministering to its necessities; and, above all, that religion must be recommended by consistency of character and conduct.

It is the strong evidence of truths like these, wrought out of their daily experience, and forced upon them as principles of action, which renders the women of England what they are, or rather were, and which fits them for becoming able instruments in the promotion of public and private good; for all must allow, that it is to the indefatigable exertions and faithful labors of women of this class, that England chiefly owes the support of some of her noblest and most benevolent institutions; while it is to their unobtrusive and untiring efforts, that the unfortunate and afflicted often are indebted for the only sympathy—the only kind attention that ever reaches their obscure abodes, or diffuses cheerfulness and comfort through the solitary chambers of suffering and sickness—the only aid that relieves the victims of penury and want—the only consolation that ever visits the desolate and degraded in their wretchedness and despair.

I acknowledge there are noble instances in the annals of English history, and perhaps never more than at the present day, of

women of the highest rank devoting their time and their property to objects of benevolence ; but from the very nature of their early habits and domestic circumstances, they are upon the whole less fitted for practical usefulness, than those who move within a lower sphere. I am also fully sensible of the charities which abound among the poor ; and often have I been led to compare the actual merit of the magnificent bestowments of those who know not one comfort the less, with that of the poor man's offering, and the widow's mite. Still my opinion remains the same, that in the situation of the middle class of women in England, are combined advantages in the formation of character, to which they owe much of their distinction, and their country much of her moral worth.

The true English woman, accustomed to bear about with her her energies for daily use, her affections for daily happiness, and her delicate perceptions for hourly aids in the discovery of what is best to do or to leave undone, by this means obtains an insight into human nature, a power of adaptation, and a readiness of application of the right means to the desired end, which not only render her the most valuable friend, but the most delightful of fireside companions, because she is thus enabled to point the plainest moral, and adorn the simplest tale, with all those freshly-formed ideas which arise out of actual experience and the contemplation of unvarnished truth.

Among their other characteristics, the women of England are freely spoken of as plebeian in their manners, and cold in their affections ; but their unpolished and occasionally embarrassed manner, as frequently conceals a delicacy that imparts the most refined and elevated sentiment to their familiar acts of duty and regard ; and those who know them best are compelled to acknowledge that all the noblest passions, the deepest feelings, and the highest aspirations of humanity, may be found within the brooding quiet of an English woman's heart.

There are flowers that burst upon us, and startle the eye with the splendor of their

beauty ; we gaze until we are dazzled, and then turn away, remembering nothing but their gorgeous hues. There are others that refresh the traveller by the sweetness they diffuse—but he has to search for the source of his delight. He finds it imbedded among green leaves ; it may be less lovely than he had anticipated, in its form and color, but oh, how welcome is the memory of that flower, when the evening breeze is again made fragrant with its perfume !

It is thus that the unpretending virtues of the female character force themselves upon our regard, so that the woman *herself* is nothing in comparison with her attributes, and we remember less the celebrated belle, than her who made us happy.

Nor is it by their frequent and faithful services alone, that English women are distinguished. The greater proportion of them were diligent and thoughtful readers. It was not with them a point of importance to devour every book that was written as soon as it came out. They were satisfied to single out the best, and, making themselves familiar with every page, conversed with the writer as with a friend, and felt that with minds superior, but yet congenial to their own, they could make friends indeed. In this manner their solitude was cheered, their hours of labor sweetened, and their conversation rendered at once piquant and instructive. This was preserved from the technicalities of common-place by the peculiar nature of their social and mental habits. They were accustomed to think for themselves ; and, deprived in some measure of access to what might be esteemed the highest authorities in matters of sentiment and taste, they drew their conclusions from reasoning, and their reasoning from actual observation. It is true, their sphere of observation was microscopic, compared with that of the individual who enjoys the means of travelling from court to court, and of mixing with the polished society of every nation ; but an acute vision directed to immediate objects, whatever they may be, will often discover as much of the wonders of creation, and supply the intelligent mind

with food for reflection as valuable, as that which is the result of a widely extended view, where the objects, though more numerous, are consequently less distinct.

Thus the domestic woman, moving in a comparatively limited circle, is not necessarily confined to a limited number of ideas, but can often expatiate upon subjects of mere local interest, with a vigor of intellect, a freshness of feeling, and a liveliness of fancy, which create, in the mind of the uninitiated stranger, a perfect longing to be admitted into the home associations from whence are derived such a world of amusement, and so unfailing a relief from the severer duties of life.

It is not from the acquisition of ideas, but from the application of them, that conversation derives its greatest charm. Thus an exceedingly well-informed talker may be indescribably tedious; while one who is comparatively ignorant, as regards mere facts, having brought to bear, upon every subject contemplated, a lively imagination combined with a sound judgment, and a memory stored, not only with dates and historical events, but with strong and clear impressions of familiar things, may rivet the attention of his hearers, and startle them, for the time, into a distinctness of impression which imparts a degree of delightful complacency both to his hearers, and to the entertainer himself.

In the exercise of this kind of tact, the women of England, when they can be induced to cast off their shyness and reserve, are peculiarly excellent, and there is consequently an originality in their humor, a firmness in their reasoning, and a tone of delicacy in their perceptions, scarcely to be found elsewhere in the same degree, and combined in the same manner; nor should it ever be forgotten, in speaking of their peculiar merits, that the freshness and the charm of their conversation is reserved for their own firesides—for moments, when the wearied frame is most in need of exhilaration, when the mind is thrown upon its own resources for the restoration of its exhausted powers, and

when home associations and home affections are the balm which the wounded spirit needs.

But above all other characteristics of the women of England, the strong moral feeling pervading even their most trifling and familiar actions, ought to be mentioned as most conducive to the maintenance of that high place which they so justly claim in the society of their native land. The apparent coldness and reserve of English women ought only to be regarded as a means adopted for the preservation of their purity of mind,—an evil, if you choose to call it so, but an evil of so mild a nature, in comparison with that which it wards off, that it may with truth be said to “lean to virtue’s side.”

I have said before, that the sphere of a domestic woman’s observation is microscopic. She is therefore sensible of defects within that sphere, which, to a more extended vision, would be imperceptible. If she looked abroad for her happiness, she would be less disturbed by any falling off at home. If her interest and her energies were diffused through a wider range, she would be less alive to the minuter claims upon her attention. It is possible she may sometimes attach too much importance to the minutiae of her own domestic world, especially when her mind is imperfectly cultivated and informed: but, on the other hand, there arises, from the same cause, a scrupulous exactness, a studious observance of the means of happiness, a delicacy of perception, a purity of mind, and a dignified correctness of manner, for which the women of England are unrivalled by those of any other nation.

By a certain class of individuals, their general conduct may possibly be regarded as too prudish to be strictly in keeping with enlarged and liberal views of human life. These are such as object to find the strict principles of female action carried out towards themselves. But let every man who disputes the right foundation of this system of conduct, imagine in the place of the woman whose retiring shyness provokes his contempt, his sister or his friend: and, while he substitutes another be-

ing, similarly constituted, for himself, he will immediately perceive that the boundary-line of safety, beyond which no true friend of woman ever tempted her to pass, is drawn many degrees within that which he had marked out for his own intercourse with the female sex. Nor is it in the small and separate deviations from this strict line of propriety, that any great degree of culpability exists. Each individual act may be simple in itself, and almost too insignificant for remark ; it is habit that stamps the character, and custom, that renders common. Who then can guard too scrupulously against the first opening, and almost imperceptible change of manners, by which the whole aspect of domestic life would be altered ? And who would not rather that English women should be guarded by a wall of scruples, than allowed to degenerate into less worthy and less efficient supporters of their country's moral worth ?

Were it only in their intercourse with mixed society that English women were distinguished by this strict regard to the proprieties of life, it might with some justice fall under the ban of prudery ; but, happily for them, it extends to every sphere of action in which they move, discountenancing vice in every form, and investing social duty with that true moral dignity which it ought ever to possess.

I am not ignorant that this can only be consistently carried out under the influence of personal religion. I must, therefore, be understood to speak with limitations, and as comparing my own countrywomen with those of other nations—as acknowledging melancholy exceptions—and not only fervently desiring that every one professed a religion capable of leading them in a more excellent way, but that all who do profess that religion were studiously careful in these minor points. Still I do believe that the women of England are not surpassed by those of any other country for their clear perception of the right and the wrong of common and familiar things, for their reference to principle in the ordinary affairs of life, and for their united maintenance of that social order, sound integrity, and do-

mestic peace, which constitute the foundation of all that is most valuable in the society of our native land.

Much as I have said of the influence of the domestic habits of my countrywomen, it is, after all, to the prevalence of religious instruction, and the operation of religious principle upon the heart, that the consistent maintenance of their high tone of moral character is to be attributed. Among families in the middle class of society of this country, those who live without regard to religion are exceptions to the general rule ; while the great proportion of individuals thus circumstanced are not only accustomed to give their time and attention to religious observances, but, there is every reason to believe, are materially affected in their lives and conduct by the operation of Christian principles upon their own minds. Women are said to be more easily brought under this influence than men ; and we consequently see, in places of public worship, and on all occasions in which a religious object is the motive for exertion, a greater proportion of women than of men. The same proportion may possibly be observed in places of amusement, and where objects less desirable claim the attention of the public ; but this ought not to render us insensible to the high privileges of our favored country, where there is so much to interest, to please, and to instruct, in what is connected with the highest and holiest uses to which we can devote the talents committed to our trust.

CHAPTER II.

INFLUENCE OF THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND.

It might form a subject of interesting inquiry, how far the manifold advantages possessed by England as a country, derive their origin remotely from the cause already described ; but the immediate object of the present work is to show how intimate is the connection which exists between the *women* of England, and the *moral* character maintained by their

country in the scale of nations. For a woman to undertake such a task, may at first sight appear like an act of presumption ; yet when it is considered that the appropriate business of men is to direct, and expatiate upon those expansive and important measures for which their capabilities are more peculiarly adapted, and that to women belongs the minute and particular observance of all those trifles which fill up the sum of human happiness or misery, it may surely be deemed pardonable for a woman to solicit the serious attention of her own sex, while she endeavors to prove that it is the minor morals of domestic life which give the tone to English character, and that over this sphere of duty it is her peculiar province to preside.

Aware that the word *preside*, used as it is here, may produce a startling effect upon the ear of man, I must endeavor to bespeak his forbearance, by assuring him, that the highest aim of the writer does not extend beyond the act of warning the women of England back to their domestic duties, in order that they may become better wives, more useful daughters and mothers, who by their examples shall bequeath a rich inheritance to those who follow in their steps.

On the other hand, I am equally aware that a work such as I am proposing to myself must be liable to the condemnation of all modern young ladies, as a homely, uninteresting book, and wholly unsuited to the present enlightened times. I must therefore endeavor also to conciliate their good-will, by assuring them, that all which is most lovely, poetical, and interesting, nay, even *heroic* in women, derives its existence from the source I am now about to open to their view, with all the ability I am able to command :—and would it were a hundred-fold, for their sakes !

The kind of encouragement I would hold out to them is, however, of a nature so widely different from the compliments to which they are too much accustomed, that I feel the difficulty existing in the present day, of stimulating a laudable ambition in the female mind, without the aid of public praise or printed records of the actual product of their

meritorious exertions. The sphere of woman's happiest and most beneficial influence is a domestic one, but it is not easy to award even to her quiet and unobtrusive virtues that meed of approbation which they really deserve, without exciting a desire to forsake the homely household duties of the family circle to practise such as are more conspicuous, and consequently more productive of an immediate harvest of applause.

I say this with all kindness, and I desire to say it with all gentleness, to the young, the amiable, and the—*rain* ; at the same time that my perception of the temptation to which they are exposed, enhances my value for the principle that is able to withstand it, and increases my admiration of those noble-minded women who *are* able to carry forward, with exemplary patience and perseverance, the public offices of benevolence, without sacrificing their home duties, and who thus prove to the world, that the perfection of female character is a combination of private and public virtue,—of domestic charity, and zeal for the temporal and eternal happiness of the whole human race.

No one can be further than the writer of these pages from wishing to point out as objects of laudable emulation those domestic drudges, who, because of some affinity between culinary operations, and the natural tone and character of their own minds, prefer the kitchen to the drawing-room,—of their own free choice, employ their whole lives in the constant bustle of providing for mere animal appetite, and waste their ingenuity in the creation of new wants and wishes, which all their faculties again are taxed to supply. This class of individuals have, by a sad mistake in our nomenclature, been called *useful*, and hence, in some degree, may arise the unpopular reception which this valuable word is apt to meet with in female society.

It does not require much consideration to perceive that these are not the women to give a high moral tone to the national character of England ; yet so entirely do human actions derive their dignity or their meanness from the *motives* by which they are prompted,

that it is no violation of truth to say, the most servile drudgery may be ennobled by the self-sacrifice, the patience, the cheerful submission to duty, with which it is performed. Thus a high-minded and intellectual woman is never more truly great than when willingly and judiciously performing kind offices for the sick; and much as may be said, and said justly, in praise of the public virtues of women, the voice of nature is so powerful in every human heart, that, could the question of superiority on these two points be universally proposed, a response would be heard throughout the world, in favor of woman in her private and domestic character.

Nor would the higher and more expansive powers of usefulness with which women are endowed, suffer from want of exercise, did they devote themselves assiduously to their domestic duties. I am rather inclined to think they would receive additional vigor from the healthy tone of their own minds, and the leisure and liberty afforded by the systematic regularity of their household affairs. Time would never hang heavily on their hands, but each moment being husbanded with care, and every agent acting under their influence being properly chosen and instructed, they would find ample opportunity to go forth on errands of mercy, secure that in their absence the machinery they had set in motion would still continue to work, and to work well.

But if, on the other hand, all was confusion and neglect at home—filial appeals unanswered—domestic comforts uncalculated—husbands, sons, and brothers referred to servants for all the little offices of social kindness, in order that the ladies of the family might hurry away at the appointed time to some committee-room, scientific lecture, or public assembly: however laudable the object for which they met, there would be sufficient cause why their cheeks should be mantled with a blush of burning shame, when they heard the women of England and their virtues spoken of in that high tone of approbation and applause, which those who aspire only to be about their Master's business will

feel little pleasure in listening to, and which those whose charity has not begun at home, ought never to appropriate to themselves.

It is a widely mistaken notion to suppose that the sphere of usefulness recommended here, is a humiliating and degrading one. As if the earth that fosters and nourishes in its lovely bosom the roots of all the plants and trees which ornament the garden of the world, feeding them from her secret storehouse with supplies that never fail, were less important, in the economy of vegetation, than the sun that brings to light their verdure and their flowers, or the genial atmosphere that perfects their growth, and diffuses their perfume abroad upon the earth. To carry out the simile still further, it is but just to give the preference to that element which, in the absence of all other favoring circumstances, withholds not its support; but when the sun is shrouded, and the showers forget to fall, and blighting winds go forth, and the hand of culture is withdrawn, still opens out its hidden fountains, and yields up its resources, to invigorate, to cherish, and sustain.

It would be an easy and a grateful task, thus, by metaphor and illustration, to prove the various excellences and amiable peculiarities of women, did not the utility of the present work demand a more minute and homely detail of that which constitutes her practical and individual duty. It is too much the custom with writers, to speak in these general terms of the *loveliness* of the female character; as if woman were some fragrant flower, created only to bloom, and exhale in sweets; when perhaps these very writers are themselves most strict in requiring that the domestic drudgery of their own households should each day be faithfully filled up. How much more generous, just, and noble would it be to deal fairly by woman in these matters, and to tell her that to be *individually*, what she is praised for being *in general*, it is necessary for her to lay aside all her natural caprice, her love of self-indulgence, her vanity, her indolence—in short, her very *self*—and assuming a new nature, which nothing less than watchfulness and prayer can enable her

constantly to maintain, to spend her mental and moral capabilities in devising means for promoting the happiness of others, while her own derives a remote and secondary existence from theirs.

If an admiration almost unbounded for the perfection of female character, with a sisterly participation in all the errors and weaknesses to which she is liable, and a profound sympathy with all that she is necessarily compelled to feel and suffer, are qualifications for the task I have undertaken, these certainly are points on which I yield to none ; but at the same time that I do my feeble best, I must deeply regret that so few are the voices lifted up in her defence against the dangerous influence of popular applause, and the still more dangerous tendency of modern habits, and modern education. Perhaps it is not to be expected that those who write most powerfully, should most clearly perceive the influence of the one, or the tendency of the other ; because the very strength and consistency of their own minds must in some measure exempt them from participation in either. While, therefore, in the art of reasoning, a writer like myself must be painfully sensible of her own deficiency, in sympathy of feeling, she is perhaps the better qualified to address the weakest of her sex.

With such, it is a favorite plea, brought forward in extenuation of their own uselessness, that they have no influence—that they are not leading women—that society takes no note of them ; forgetting, while they shelter themselves beneath these indolent excuses, that the very feather on the stream may serve to warn the doubtful mariner of the rapid and fatal current by which his bark might be hurried to destruction. It is, moreover, from among this class that wives are more frequently chosen ; for there is a peculiarity in men—I would fain call it *benevolence*—which inclines them to offer the benefit of their protection to the most helpless and dependant of the female sex ; and therefore it is upon this class that the duty of training up the young most frequently devolves ; not certainly upon the naturally imbecile, but upon the uncal-

culating creatures whose non-exercise of their own mental and moral faculties renders them not only willing to be led through the experience of life, but thankful to be relieved from the responsibility of thinking and acting for themselves.

It is an important consideration, that from such women as these, myriads of immortal beings derive that early bias of character, which under Providence decides their fate, not only in this world, but in the world to come. And yet they flutter on, and say they have no influence—they do not aspire to be leading women—they are in society but as grains of sand on the sea-shore. Would they but pause one moment to ask how will this plea avail them, when as daughters without gratitude, friends without good faith, wives without consideration, and mothers without piety, they stand before the bar of judgment, to render an account of the talents committed to their trust ! Have they not parents, to whom they might study to repay the debt of care and kindness accumulated in their childhood ? —perhaps to whom they might overpay this debt, by assisting to remove such obstacles as apparently intercept the line of duty, and by endeavoring to alleviate the perplexing cares which too often obscure the path of life ! Have they not their young friendships, for those sunny hours when the heart expands itself in the genial atmosphere of mutual love, and shrinks not from revealing its very weaknesses and errors ; so that a faithful hand has but to touch its tender chords, and conscience is awakened, and then instruction may be poured in, and medicine may be administered, and the messenger of peace, with healing on his wings, may be invited to come in, and make that heart his home ? Have not they known the secrets of some faithful bosom laid bare before them in a deeper and yet more confiding attachment, when, however insignificant they might be to the world in general, they held an influence almost unbounded over one human being, and could pour in, for the bane or the blessing of that bosom, according to the fountain from whence their own was supplied, either draughts of bitterness or floods

of light? Have they not bound themselves by a sacred and enduring bond, to be to one fellow-traveller along the path of life, a companion on his journey, and, as far as ability might be granted them, a guide and a help in the doubts and the difficulties of his way? Under these urgent and serious responsibilities, have they not been appealed to, both in words and in looks, and in the silent language of the heart, for that promised help? And how has the appeal been answered? Above all, have they not, many of them, had the feeble steps of infancy committed to their care—the pure unsullied page of childhood presented to them for its first and most durable inscription?—and what have they written there? It is vain to plead their inability, and say they knew not what to write, and therefore left the tablet untouched, or sent away the vacant page to be filled up by other hands. Time will prove to them they *have* written, if not by any direct instrumentality, by their example, their conversation, and the natural influence of mind on mind. Experience will prove to them they have written; and the transcript of *what* they have written, will be treasured up, either for or against them, among the awful records of eternity.

It is therefore not only false in reasoning, but wrong in principle, for women to assert, as they not unfrequently do with a degree of puerile satisfaction, that they have no influence. An influence fraught either with good or evil, they must have; and though the one may be above their ambition, and the other beyond their fears, by neglecting to obtain an influence which shall be beneficial to society, they necessarily assume a bad one: just in the same proportion as their selfishness, indolence, or vacuity of mind, render them in youth an easy prey to every species of unamiable temper, in middle age the melancholy victims of mental disease, and, long before the curtain of death conceals their follies from the world, a burden and a bane to society at large.

A superficial observer might rank with this class many of those exemplary women, who pass to and fro upon the earth with noiseless

step, whose names are never heard, and who, even in society, if they attempt to speak, have scarcely the ability to command an attentive audience. Yet among this unpretending class are found striking and noble instances of women, who, apparently feeble and insignificant, when called into action by pressing and peculiar circumstances, can accomplish great and glorious purposes, supported and carried forward by that most valuable of all faculties—*moral power*. And just in proportion as women cultivate this faculty (under the blessing of Heaven) independently of all personal attractions, and unaccompanied by any high attainments in learning or art, is their influence over their fellow-creatures, and consequently their power of doing good.

It is not to be presumed that women *possess* more moral power than men; but happily for them, such are their early impressions, associations, and general position in the world, that their moral feelings are less liable to be impaired by the pecuniary objects which too often constitute the chief end of man, and which, even under the limitations of better principle, necessarily engage a large portion of his thoughts. There are many humble-minded women, not remarkable for any particular intellectual endowments, who yet possess so clear a sense of the right and wrong of individual actions, as to be of essential service in aiding the judgments of their husbands, brothers, or sons, in those intricate affairs in which it is sometimes difficult to dis sever worldly wisdom from religious duty.

To men belongs the potent (I had almost said the *omnipotent*) consideration of worldly aggrandizement; and it is constantly misleading their steps, closing their ears against the voice of conscience, and beguiling them with the promise of peace, where peace was never found. Long before the boy has learned to exult in the dignity of the man, his mind has become familiarized to the habit of investing with supreme importance, all considerations relating to the acquisition of wealth. He hears on the Sabbath, and on stated occasions, when men meet for that especial purpose, of a God to be worshipped,

a Saviour to be trusted in, and a holy law to be observed; but he sees before him, and every day and every hour, a strife, which is nothing less than deadly to the highest impulses of the soul, after another God—the Mammon of unrighteousness—the Moloch of this world; and believing rather what men do, than what they preach, he learns too soon to mingle with the living mass, and to unite his labors with theirs. To unite! Alas! there is no union in the great field of action in which he is engaged; but envy, and hatred, and opposition, to the close of the day,—every man's hand against his brother, and each struggling to exalt himself, not merely by trampling upon his fallen foe, but by usurping the place of his weaker brother, who faints by his side, from not having brought an equal portion of strength into the conflict, and who is consequently borne down by numbers, hurried over, and forgotten.

This may be an extreme, but it is scarcely an exaggerated picture of the engagements of men of business in the present day. And surely they now need more than ever all the assistance which Providence has kindly provided, to win them away from this warfare, to remind them that they are hastening on towards a world into which none of the treasures they are amassing can be admitted; and, next to those holier influences which operate through the medium of revelation, or through the mysterious instrumentality of Divine love, I have little hesitation in saying, that the society of woman, in her highest moral capacity, is best calculated to effect this purpose.

How often has man returned to his home with a mind confused by the many voices, which in the mart, the exchange, or the public assembly, have addressed themselves to his inborn selfishness or his worldly pride; and while his integrity was shaken, and his resolution gave way beneath the pressure of apparent necessity, or the insidious pretences of expediency, he has stood corrected before the clear eye of woman, as it looked directly to the naked truth, and detected the lurking evil of the specious act he was about to commit.

Nay, so potent may have become this secret influence, that he may have borne it about with him like a kind of second conscience, for mental reference, and spiritual counsel, in moments of trial; and when the snares of the world were around him, and temptations from within and without have bribed over the witness in his own bosom, he has thought of the humble monitress who sat alone, guarding the fireside comforts of his distant home; and the remembrance of her character, clothed in moral beauty, has scattered the clouds before his mental vision, and sent him back to that beloved home, a wiser and a better man.

The women of England, possessing the grand privilege of being better instructed than those of any other country in the minutiae of domestic comfort, have obtained a degree of importance in society far beyond what their unobtrusive virtues would appear to claim. The long-established customs of their country, have placed in their hands the high and holy duty of cherishing and protecting the minor morals of life, from whence springs all that is elevated in purpose, and glorious in action. The sphere of their direct personal influence is central, and consequently small; but its extreme operations are as widely extended as the range of human feeling. They may be less striking in society than some of the women of other countries, and may feel themselves, on brilliant and stirring occasions, as simple, rude, and unsophisticated in the popular science of excitement; but as far as the noble daring of Britain has sent forth her adventurous sons, and that is to every point of danger on the habitable globe, they have borne along with them a generosity, a disinterestedness, and a moral courage, derived in no small measure from the female influence of their native country.

It is a fact well worthy of our most serious attention, and one which bears immediately upon the subject under consideration, that the present state of our national affairs is such as to indicate that the influence of woman in counteracting the growing evils of

society is about to be more needed than ever.

In our imperfect state of being, we seldom attain any great or national good without its accompaniment of evil; and every improvement proposed for the general weal, has, upon some individual, or some class of individuals, an effect which it requires a fresh exercise of energy and principle to guard against. Thus the great facilities of communication, not only throughout our own country, but with distant parts of the world, are rousing men of every description to tenfold exertion in the field of competition in which they are engaged; so that their whole being is becoming swallowed up in efforts and calculations relating to their pecuniary success. If to grow tardy or indifferent in the race were only to lose the goal, many would be glad to pause; but such is the nature of commerce and trade as at present carried on in this country, that to slacken in exertion, is altogether to fail. I would fain hope and believe of my countrymen, that many of the rational and enlightened would now be willing to reap smaller gains, if by so doing they could enjoy more leisure. But a business only half attended to, soon ceases to be a business at all; and the man of enlightened understanding, who neglects his, for the sake of hours of leisure, must be content to spend them in the debtor's department of a jail.

Thus, it is not with single individuals that the blame can be made to rest. The fault is in the system; and happy will it be for thousands of immortal souls, when this system shall correct itself. In the mean time, may it not be said to be the especial duty of women to look around them, and see in what way they can counteract this evil, by calling back the attention of man to those sunnier spots in his existence, by which the growth of his moral feelings have been encouraged, and his heart improved?

We cannot believe of the fathers who watched over our childhood, of the husbands who shared our intellectual pursuits, of the brothers who went hand in hand with us in our love of poetry and nature, that they are

all gone over to the side of mammon, that there does not lurk in some corner of their hearts a secret longing to return; yet every morning brings the same hurried and indifferent parting, every evening the same jaded, speechless, welcomeless return—until we almost fail to recognise the man, in the machine.

English homes have been much boasted of by English people, both at home and abroad. What would a foreigner think of those neat, and sometimes elegant residences, which form a circle of comparative gentility around our cities and our trading towns? What would he think, when told that the fathers of those families have not time to see their children except on the Sabbath-day? and that the mothers, impatient, and anxious to consult them about some of their domestic plans, have to wait, perhaps for days, before they can find them for five minutes disengaged, either from actual exertion, or from that sleep which necessarily steals upon them immediately after the over-excitement of the day has permitted them a moment of repose.

And these are rational, intellectual, accountable, and immortal beings, undergoing a course of discipline by which they are to be fitted for eternal existence! What woman can look on without asking—"Is there nothing I can do, to call them back?" Surely there is; but it never can be done by the cultivation of those faculties which contribute only to selfish gratification. Since her society is shared for so short a time, she must endeavor to make those moments more rich in blessing; and since her influence is limited to so small a range of immediate operation, it should be rendered so potent as to mingle with the whole existence of those she loves.

Will an increase of intellectual attainments, or a higher style of accomplishments, effect this purpose? Will the common-place frivolities of morning calls, or an interminable range of superficial reading, enable them to assist their brothers, their husbands, or their sons in becoming happier and better men?

No: let the aspect of society be what it may, man is a social being, and beneath the

hard surface he puts on, to fit him for the wear and tear of every day, he has a heart as true to the kindly affections of our nature, as that of woman—as true, though not as suddenly awakened to every passing call. He has therefore need of all her sisterly services, and, under the pressure of the present times, he needs them more than ever, to foster in his nature, and establish in his character, that higher tone of feeling without which he can enjoy nothing beyond a kind of animal existence—but with which, he may faithfully pursue the necessary avocations of the day, and keep as it were a separate soul for his family, his social duty, and his God.

There is another point of consideration by which this necessity for a higher degree of female influence is greatly increased, and it is one which comprises much that is interesting to those who aspire to be the supporters of their country's worth. The British throne being now graced by a female sovereign, the auspicious promise of whose early years seems to form a new era in the annals of our nation, and to inspire with brighter hopes and firmer confidence the patriot bosoms of her expectant people; it is surely not a time for the female part of the community to fall away from the high standard of moral excellence, to which they have been accustomed to look, in the formation of their domestic habits. Rather let them show forth the benefits arising from their more enlightened systems of education, by proving to their youthful sovereign, that whatever plan she may think it right to sanction for the moral advancement of her subjects, and the promotion of their true interests as an intelligent and happy people, will be welcomed by every female heart throughout her realm, and faithfully supported in every British home by the female influence prevailing there.

It will be the business of the writer through the whole of the succeeding pages of this work, to endeavor to point out, how the women of England may render this important service, not only to the members of their own

households, but to the community at large; and if I fail in arousing them to bring, as with one mind, their united powers to stem the popular torrent now threatening to undermine the strong foundation of England's moral worth, it will not be for want of earnestness in the cause, but because I am not endowed with talent equal to the task.

CHAPTER III.

MODERN EDUCATION.

In writing on the subject of modern education, I cannot help entertaining a fear lest some remarks I may in candor feel constrained to make, should be construed into disrespect towards that truly praiseworthy and laborious portion of the community, employed in conducting this education, and pursuing, with laudable endeavors, what is generally believed to be the best method of training up the young women of the present day. Such, however, is the real state of my own sentiments, that I have long been accustomed to consider this class of individuals as not only entitled to the highest pecuniary consideration, but equally so to the first place in society, to the gratitude of their fellow-creatures, and to the respect of mankind in general, who, both as individuals, and as a community, are deeply indebted to them for their indefatigable and often ill-requited services.

A woman of cultivated understanding and correct religious principle, when engaged in the responsible task of educating the rising generation, in reality fills one of the most responsible stations to which a human being can aspire; and nothing can more clearly indicate a low state of public morals than the vulgar disrespect and parsimonious remuneration with which the agents employed in education are sometimes required.

It is with what is taught, not with those who teach, that I am daring enough to find fault. It may be that I am taking an unen-

lightened and prejudiced view of the subject ; yet, such is the strong conviction of my own mind, that I cannot rest without attempting to prove that the present education of the women of England does not fit them for faithfully performing the duties which devolve upon them immediately after their leaving school, and throughout the whole of their after lives,—does not convert them from helpless children into such characters as all women must be, in order to be either esteemed or admired.

Nor are their teachers accountable for this. It is the fashion of the day—it is the ambition of the times, that all people should, as far as possible, learn all things of which the human intellect takes cognizance ; and what would be the consternation of parents whose daughter should return home to them from school unskilled in modern accomplishments,—to whom her governess should say, “It is true, I have been unable to make your child a proficient either in French or Latin, nor is she very apt at the use of the globes, but she has been pre-eminent among my scholars for her freedom from selfishness, and she possesses a nobility of feeling that will never allow her to be the victim of meanness, or the slave of grovelling desires.”

In order to ascertain what kind of education is most effective in making woman what she ought to be, the best method is to inquire into the character, station, and peculiar duties of woman throughout the largest portion of her earthly career ; and then ask, for what she is most valued, admired, and beloved.

In answer to this, I have little hesitation in saying,—for her disinterested kindness. Look at all the heroines whether of romance or reality—at all the female characters that are held up to universal admiration—at all who have gone down to honored graves, among the tears and the lamentations of their survivors. Have these been the learned, the accomplished women ; the women who could speak many languages, who could solve problems, and elucidate systems of philosophy ? No : or if they have, they have also been women who were dignified with the

majesty of moral greatness—women who regarded not themselves, their own feebleness, or their own susceptibility of pain, but who, endued with an almost superhuman energy, could trample under foot every impediment that intervened between them and the accomplishment of some great object upon which their hopes were fixed, while that object was wholly unconnected with their own personal exaltation or enjoyment, and related only to some beloved object, whose suffering was their sorrow, whose good their gain.

Woman, with all her accumulation of minute disquietudes, her weakness, and her sensibility, is but a meager item in the catalogue of humanity ; but roused by a sufficient motive to forget all these, or, rather, continually forgetting them, because she has other and nobler thoughts to occupy her mind, woman is truly and majestically great.

Never yet, however, was woman great because she had great acquirements ; nor can she ever be great in herself—personally, and without instrumentality—as an object, not an agent.

From the beginning to the end of school education, the improvement of *self*, so far as relates to intellectual attainments, is made the rule and the motive of all that is done. Rewards are appointed and portioned out for what has been learned, not what has been imparted. To gain, is the universal order of the establishment ; and those who have heaped together the greatest sum of knowledge are usually regarded as the most meritorious. Excellent discourses may be delivered by the preceptress upon the Christian duties of benevolence and disinterested love ; but the whole system is one of pure selfishness, fed by accumulation, and rewarded by applause. To be at the head of the class, to gain the ticket or the prize, are the points of universal ambition ; and few individuals, among the community of aspirants, are taught to look forward with a rational presentiment to that future, when their merit will be to give the place of honor to others, and their happiness to give it to those who are more worthy than themselves.

We will not assert that no one entertains such thoughts; for there is a voice in woman's heart too strong for education—a principle which the march of intellect is unable to overthrow.

Retiring from the emulous throng, we sometimes find a little, despised, neglected girl, who has won no prize, obtained no smile of approbation from her superiors. She is a dull girl, who learns slowly, and cannot be taught so as to keep up with the rest without incalculable pains. The fact is, she has no great wish to keep up with them: she only wants to be loved and trusted by her teachers; and oh! how does she wish, with tears, and almost with prayers, that they would love and trust her, and give her credit for doing her best. Beyond this she is indifferent; she has no motive but that of pleasing others, for trying to be clever; and she is quite satisfied that her friend, the most ambitious girl in the school, should obtain all the honors without her competition. Indeed, she feels as though it scarcely would be delicate, scarcely kind in her, to try so much to advance before her friend; and she gently falls back, is reproved for her neglect, and, finally, despised.

I knew a girl who was one of the best grammarians in a large school, whose friend was peculiarly defective in that particular branch of learning. Once every year the order of the class was reversed, the girl who held the highest place exchanging situations with the lowest, and thus affording all an equal chance of obtaining honors. The usual order of the class was soon restored, except that the good grammarian was always expected by her friend to whisper in her ear a suitable answer to every question proposed, and as this girl necessarily retrograded to the place to which her own ignorance entitled her, her friend felt bound by affection and kindness to relieve her distress every time the alarming question came to her turn. She consequently remained the lowest in the class until the time of her leaving the school, often subjected to the reproofs of her teachers, and fully alive to her humiliating situation, but never once turning a deaf ear to

her friend, or refusing to assist her in her difficulties.

In the schools of the ancients, an act of patient disinterestedness like this, would have met with encouragement and reward; in the school where it took place, it was well for both parties that it was never known.

In making these and similar remarks, I am aware that I may bring upon myself the charge of wishing to exclude from our schools all intellectual attainments whatever; for how, it will be asked, can learning be acquired without emulation, and without rewards for the diligent, and punishments for the idle?

So far, however, from wishing to cast a shade of disrespect over such attainments, I am decidedly of opinion that no human being can know too much, so long as the sphere of knowledge does not extend to what is positively evil. I am also of opinion that there is scarcely any department of art or science, still less of mental application, which is not calculated to strengthen and improve the mind; but at the same time I regard the improvement of the *heart* of so much greater consequence, that if time and opportunity should fail for both, I would strenuously recommend that women should be sent home from school with fewer accomplishments, and more of the will and the power to perform the various duties necessarily devolving upon them.

Again, I am reminded of the serious and important fact, that religion alone can improve the heart; and to this statement no one can yield assent with more reverential belief in its truth than myself. I acknowledge, also, for I know it to be a highly creditable fact, that a large proportion of the meritorious individuals who take upon themselves the arduous task of training up the young, are conscientiously engaged in giving to religious instruction that place which it ought unquestionably to hold in every Christian school. But I would ask, is *instruction* all that is wanted for instilling into the minds of the rising generation the benign principles of Christian faith and practice?

It is not thought enough to instruct the young sculptor in the rules of his art, to charge his memory with the names of those who have excelled in it, and with the principles they have laid down for the guidance of others—No: he must work with his own hand; and long before that hand, and the mind by which it is influenced, have attained maturity, he must have learned to mould the pliant clay, and have thus become familiar with the practice of his art.

And shall this universally acknowledged system of instruction, to which we are indebted for all that is excellent in art and admirable in science, be neglected in the education of the young Christian alone? Shall he be taught the bare theory of his religion, and left to work out its practice as he can? Shall he be instructed in what he is to believe, and not assisted in *doing* also the will of his heavenly Father?

We all know that it is not easy to practise even the simplest rule of right, when we have not been accustomed to do so: and the longer we are before we begin to regulate our conduct by the precepts of religion, the more difficult it will be to acquire such habits as are calculated to adorn and show forth the purity and excellence of its principles.

There is one important difference between the acquisition of knowledge, and the acquisition of good habits, which of itself ought to be sufficient to ensure a greater degree of attention to the latter. When the little pupil first begins her education, her mind is a total blank, as far as relates to the different branches of study into which she is about to be introduced, and there is consequently nothing to oppose. She is not prepossessed in favor of any false system of arithmetic, grammar, or geography, and the ideas presented to her on these subjects are consequently willingly received, and adopted as her own.

How different is the moral state of the uninstructed child! Selfishness coeval with her existence has attained an alarming growth; and all the other passions and propensities inherent in her nature, taking their natural course, have strengthened with her

advance towards maturity, and are ready to assume an aspect too formidable to afford any prospect of their being easily brought into subjection.

Yet, notwithstanding this difference, the whole machinery of education is brought to bear upon the intellectual part of her nature, and her moral feelings are left to the training of the play-ground, where personal influence, rather than right feeling, too frequently decides her disputes, and places her either high or low in the ranks of her companions.

It is true, she is very seriously and properly corrected when *convicted* of having done wrong, and an admirable *system* of morals is promulgated in the school; but the subject I would complain of is, that no means have yet been adopted for making the *practice* of this system the object of highest importance in our schools. No adequate means have been adopted for testing the generosity, the high-mindedness, the integrity of the children who pursue their education at school, until they leave it at the age of sixteen, when their moral faculties, either for good or for evil, must have attained considerable growth.

Let us single out from any particular seminary a child who has been there from the years of ten to fifteen, and reckon, if it can be reckoned, the pains that have been spent in making that child a proficient in Latin. Have the same pains been spent in making her disinterestedly kind? And yet what man is there in existence who would not rather his wife should be free from selfishness, than be able to read Virgil without the use of a dictionary.

There is no reason, however, why both these desirable ends should not be aimed at, and as the child progresses in self-denial, forbearance, generosity, and disinterested kindness, it might be her reward to advance in the acquisition of languages, or of whatever accomplishments it might be thought most desirable for her to attain. If I am told there would not be time for all the discipline requisite for the practice of morals, I ask in reply,—how much do most young ladies learn at school for which they never find any use in

after life, and for which it is not probable, from their circumstances, that they ever should. Let the hours spent upon music by those who have no ear—upon drawing, by those who might almost be said to have no eye—upon languages, by those who never afterwards speak any other than their mother tongue—be added together year after year ; and an aggregate of wasted time will present itself, sufficient to alarm those who are sensible of its value, and of the awful responsibility of using it aright.

It is impossible that the teachers, or even the parents themselves, should always know the future destiny of the child ; but there is an appropriate sphere for women to move in, from which those of the middle class in England seldom deviate very widely. This sphere has duties and occupations of its own, from which no woman can shrink without culpability and disgrace ; and the question is, are women prepared for these duties and occupations by what they learn at school ?

For my own part, I know not how education deserves the name, if it does not prepare the individual whom it influences for filling her appointed station in the best possible manner. What, for instance, should we think of a school for sailors, in which nothing was taught but the fine arts ; or for musicians, in which the students were only instructed in the theory of sound ?

With regard to the women of England, I have already ventured to assert that the quality for which, above all others, they are esteemed and valued, is their disinterested kindness. A selfish woman may not improperly be regarded as a monster, especially in that sphere of life where there is a constant demand made upon her services. But how are women taught at school to forget themselves, and to cultivate that high tone of generous feeling to which the world is so much indebted for the hope and the joy, the peace and the consolation, which the influence and companionship of woman is able to diffuse throughout its very deserts, visiting, as with blessed sunshine, the abodes of the

wretched and the poor, and sharing cheerfully the lot of the afflicted ?

In what school, or under what system of modern education, can it be said that the chief aim of the teachers, the object to which their laborious exertions are mainly directed, is to correct the evil of selfishness in the hearts of their pupils ? Improved methods of charging and surcharging the memory are eagerly sought out, and pursued, at any cost of time and patience, if not of health itself ; but who ever thinks of establishing a *selfish* class among the girls of her establishment, or of awarding the honors and distinctions of the school to such as have exhibited the most meritorious instances of self-denial for the benefit of others ?

It may be objected to this plan, that virtue ought to be its own reward, and that honors and rewards adjudged to the most meritorious in a moral point of view, would be likely to induce a degree of self-complacency wholly inconsistent with Christian meekness. I am aware that, in our imperfect state, no plan can be laid down for the promotion of good, with which evil will not be liable to mix. All I contend for is, that the same system of discipline, with the same end in view, should be begun and carried on at school, as that to which the scholar will necessarily be subjected in after life ; and that throughout the training of her early years, the same standard of merit should be adopted, as she will find herself compelled to look up to, when released from that training, and sent forth into the world to think and act for herself.

At school it has been the business of every day to raise herself above her companions by attainments greater than theirs ; in after life it will be the business of every day to give place to others, to think of their happiness, and to make sacrifices of her own to promote it. If such acts of self-denial, when practised at school, should endanger the equanimity of her mind by the approbation they obtain, what will they do in the world she is about to enter, where the unanimous opinion of mankind, both in this and in past ages, is in their favor, and where she must

perpetually hear woman spoken of in terms of the highest commendation, not for her learning, but for her disinterested kindness, her earnest zeal in promoting the happiness of her fellow-creatures, and the patience and forbearance with which she studies to mitigate affliction and relieve distress ?

Would it not be safer, then, to begin at a very early age to make the practice of these virtues the chief object of their lives, guarding at the same time against any self-complacency that might attach to the performance of them, by keeping always before their view higher and nobler instances of virtue in others ; and especially by a strict and constant reference to the utter worthlessness of all human merit, in comparison with the mercy and forgiveness that must ever impose a debt of gratitude upon our own souls ?

Taking into consideration the various excellences and peculiarities of woman, I am inclined to think that the sphere which of all others admits of the highest development of her character, is the chamber of sickness ; and how frequently and mournfully familiar are the scenes in which she is thus called to act and feel, let the private history of every family declare.

There is but a very small proportion of the daughters of farmers, manufacturers, and trades-people, in England, who are ever called upon for their Latin, their Italian, or even for their French ; but all women in this sphere of life are liable to be called upon to visit and care for the sick ; and if in the hour of weakness and of suffering, they prove to be unacquainted with any probable means of alleviation, and wholly ignorant of the most judicious and suitable mode of offering relief and consolation, they are indeed deficient in one of the highest attainments in the way of usefulness, to which a woman can aspire.

To obviate the serious difficulties which many women experience from this cause, I would propose, as a substitute for some useless accomplishments, that English girls should be made acquainted with the most striking phenomena of some of the familiar, and frequently recurring maladies to which

the human frame is liable, with the most approved methods of treatment. And by cultivating this knowledge so far as relates to general principles, I have little doubt but it might be made an interesting and highly useful branch of education.

I am far from wishing them to interfere with the province of the physician. The more they know, the less likely they will be to do this. The office of a judicious nurse is all I would recommend them to aspire to ; and to the same department of instruction should be added the whole science of that delicate and difficult cookery which forms so important a part of the attendant's duty.

Nor let these observations call forth a smile upon the rosy lips that are yet unparched by fever, untainted by consumption. Fair reader, there have been those who would have given at the moment almost half their worldly wealth, to have been able to provide a palatable morsel for a beloved sufferer ; who have met the inquiring eye, that asked for it knew not what, and that expressed by its anxious look an almost childish longing for what they were unable to supply, not because the means were denied, but simply because they were too ignorant of the nature and necessities of illness to form any practical idea of what would be most suitable and most approved. Perhaps, in their well-meant officiousness, they mentioned the only thing they were acquainted with, and that was just the most repulsive. What then have they done ? Allowed the faint and feeble sufferer to go pining on, wishing it had been her lot to fall under the care of any other nurse.

How invaluable at such a time is the almost endless catalogue of good and suitable preparations with which the really clever woman is supplied, any one of which she is able to prepare with her own hands ; choosing, with the skill of the doctor, what is best adapted for the occasion, and converting diet into medicine of the most agreeable description, which she brings silently into the sick-room without previous mention, and thus exhilarates the spirits of the patient by an agreeable surprise !

It is customary with young ladies of the present day to think that nurses and hired attendants ought to do these things; and well and faithfully they sometimes do them, to the shame of those connected by nearer ties. But are they ignorant that a hired hand can never impart such sweetness to a cordial as a hand beloved; and that the most delicate and most effectual means of proving the strength of their affection, is to *choose* to do, what might by possibility have been accomplished by another?

When we meet in society with that speechless, inanimate, ignorant, and useless being called "a young lady just come from school," it is thought a sufficient apology for all her deficiencies, that she has, poor thing! but just come home from school. Thus implying that nothing in the way of domestic usefulness, social intercourse, or adaptation to circumstances, can be expected from her until she has had time to learn it.

If, during the four or five years spent at school, she had been establishing herself upon the foundation of her future character, and learning to practise what would afterwards be the business of her life, she would, when her education was considered as complete, be in the highest possible state of perfection which her nature, at that season of life, would admit of. This is what she ought to be. I need not advert to what she is. The case is too pitiful to justify any further description. The popular and familiar remark, "Poor thing! she has just come home from school; what can you expect?" is the best commentary I can offer.

There is another point of difference between the training of the intellect, and that of the moral feelings, of more serious importance than any we have yet considered.

We all know that the occupation of teaching, as it relates to the common branches of instruction, is one of such Herculean labor, that few persons are found equal to it for any protracted length of time; and even with such, it is necessary that they should bend their minds to it with a determined effort, and make each day a renewal of that effort,

not to be baffled by difficulties, nor defeated by want of success. We all know, too, what it is to the learned to be dragged on day by day through the dull routine of exercises in which she feels no particular interest, except what arises from getting in advance of her fellows, obtaining a prize, or suffering a punishment.

We all can remember the atmosphere of the school-room, so uncongenial to the fresh and buoyant spirits of youth—the clatter of slates, the dull point of the pencil, and the white cloud where the wrong figure, the figure that would prove the incorrectness of the whole, had so often been rubbed out. To say nothing of the morning lessons, before the dust from the desks and the floor had been put in motion, we all can remember the afternoon sensations with which we took our places, perhaps between companions the most unloved by us of any in the school; and how, while the summer's sun was shining in through the high windows, we pored with aching head over some dry dull words, that would not transmit themselves to the tablet of our memories, though repeated with indefatigable industry, repeated until they seemed to have no identity, no distinctness, but were mingled with the universal hum and buzz of the close, heated room; where the heart, if it did not forget itself to stone, at least forgot itself to sleep, and lost all power of feeling any thing but weariness, and occasional pining for relief. Class after class were then called up from this hot-bed of intellect. The tones of the teacher's voice, though not always the most musical, might easily have been pricked down in notes, they were so uniform in their cadences of interrogation, rejection, and reproof. These, blending with the slow, dull answers of the scholars, and occasionally the quick guess of one ambitious to attain the highest place, all mingled with the general monotony, and increased the general stupor that weighed down every eye, and deadened every pulse.

There are, unquestionably, quick children, who may easily be made fond of learning, if judiciously treated; and it no doubt happens to all, that there are portions of their daily

duty not absolutely disagreeable; but that weariness is the prevalent sensation both with the teachers and the taught, is a fact that few will attempt to deny; nor is it a libel upon individuals thus engaged, or upon human nature in general, that it should be so. We are so constituted that we cannot spend all our time in the exercise of our intellect, without absolute pain, especially while young; and when, in after life, we rise with exhausted patience from three hours of writing or reading, we cannot look back with wonder that at school we suffered severely from the labor of six.

It is not my province to describe how much the bodily constitution is impaired by this incessant application to study. Philanthropical means are devised for relieving the young student as much as possible, by varying the subjects of attention, and allowing short intervals of bodily exercise: but still the high-pressure system goes on; and, with all their attainments in the way of learning, few of the young ladies who return home after a highly finished education, are possessed of health and energy sufficient to make use of their attainments, even if they occupied a field more suited to their display.

I know not how it may affect others, but the number of languid, listless, and inert young ladies, who now recline upon our sofas, murmuring and repining at every claim upon their personal exertions, is to me a truly melancholy spectacle, and one which demands the attention of a benevolent and enlightened public, even more, perhaps, than some of those great national schemes in which the people and the government are alike interested. It is but rarely now that we meet with a really healthy woman: and, highly as intellectual attainments may be prized, I think all will allow that no qualifications can be of much value without the power of bringing them into use.

The difference I would point out, between the exercise of the intellect and that of the moral feelings is this. It has so pleased the all-wise Disposer of our lives, that the duties he has laid down for the right government of the human family, have in their very nature

something that expands and invigorates the soul; so that instead of being weary of well-doing, the character becomes strengthened, the energies enlivened, and the whole sphere of capability enlarged.

Who has not felt, after a long conflict between duty and inclination, when at last the determination has been formed and duty has been submitted to, not grudgingly, but from very love to the Father of mercies, who alone can judge what will eventually promote the good of his weak, erring, and short-sighted creatures—from reverence for his holy laws, and from gratitude to the Saviour of mankind;—who has not felt a sudden impulse of thanksgiving and delight as they were enabled to make this decision, a springing up, as it were, of the soul from the low cares and entanglements of this world, to a higher and purer state of existence, where the motives and feelings under which the choice has been made, will be appreciated and approved, but where every inducement that could have been brought forward to vindicate a different choice, would have been rejected at the bar of eternal justice?

It is not the applause of man that can reach the heart under such circumstances. No human eye is wished for, to look in upon our self-denial, or to witness the sacrifice we make. The good we have attempted to do may even fail in its effect. We know that the result is not with us, but with Him who seeth in secret, and who has left us in possession of this encouraging assurance, *Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of these, ye do it unto me.*

Was the human mind ever enfeebled, or the human frame exhausted, by feelings of kindness? No! The hour of true refreshment and invigoration, is that in which we do our duty, whatever it may be, cheerfully and humbly, as in the sight of God; not pluming ourselves upon our own merit, or anticipating great results, but with a child-like dependence upon his promises, and devout aspirations to be ever employed in working out his holy will.

In the pursuit of intellectual attainments, we cannot encourage ourselves throughout

the day, nor revive our wearied energies at night, by saying, "It is for the love of my heavenly Father that I do this." But, as a very little child may be taught, for the love of a lost parent, to avoid what that parent would have disapproved; so the young may be cheered and led onward in the path of duty by the same principle, connecting every action of their lives in which good and evil may be blended, with the condemnation or approval of their *Father who is in heaven*.

There is no principle in our nature which at the same time softens and ennobles, subdues and exalts, so much as the principle of gratitude; and it ought ever to be remembered, in numbering our blessings, that gratitude has been made the foundation of Christian morality. The ancient philosophers had their system of morals, and a beautiful one it was. But it had this defect—it had no sure foundation; sometimes shifting from expediency to the rights of man, and thus having no fixed and determinate character. The happier system under which we are privileged to live, has all the advantages acknowledged by the philosophers of old, with this great and merciful addition, that it is peculiarly calculated to wind itself in with our affections, by being founded upon gratitude, and thus to excite, in connection with the practice of all it enjoins, those emotions of mind which are most conducive to our happiness.

Let us imagine a little community of young women, among whom, to do an act of disinterested kindness should be an object of the highest ambition, and where to do any act of pure selfishness, tending, however remotely, to the injury of another, should be regarded as the deepest disgrace; where they should be accustomed to consider their time not as their own, but lent them solely for the purpose of benefiting their fellow-creatures; and where those who were known to exercise the greatest charity and forbearance, should be looked upon as the most exalted individuals in the whole community. Would these girls be weary? Would they be discontented, listless, and inanimate? The experiment remains to be tried.

It is a frequent and popular remark, that girls are less trouble to manage in families than boys; and so unquestionably they are. But when their parents go on to say that girls awaken less anxiety, are safer and more easily brought up, I am disposed to think such parents look with too superficial a view to the conduct of their children before the world, rather than the state of their hearts before God.

It is true that girls have little temptation, generally speaking, to vice. They are so hemmed in and guarded by the rules of society, that they must be destitute almost of the common feelings of human nature, to be willing, for any consideration, to sacrifice their good name. But do such parents ever ask, how much of evil may be cherished and indulged in, and the good name retained? I am aware that among the generality of women there is more religious *feeling* than among men, more observance of the ordinances of religion, more reading of the scriptures, and more attention to the means of religious information. But let not the woman who sits in peace, and unassailed by temptation, in the retirement of her own parlor, look down with self-complacency and contempt upon the open transgressions of her erring brother. Rather let her weigh in the scale his strong passions, and strong inducements to evil, and, it may be, strong compunctions too, against her own little envyings, bickerings, secret spite, and soul-cherished idolatry of self; and then ask of her conscience which is the furthest in advance towards the kingdom of heaven.

It is true, she has uttered no profane expression, but she has set afloat upon a winged whisper the transgression of her neighbor. She has polluted her lips with no intoxicating draught, but she has drunk of the Circean cup of flattery, and acted from vanity and self-love, when she was professing to act from higher motives. She has run into no excesses, but the excess of display; and she has injured no one by her bad example, except in the practice of petty faults. In short, she has not sinned beyond her own temptations.

One of the most striking features in the character of the young ladies of the present day, is the absence of contentment. They are lively when excited, but no sooner does the excitement cease, than they fall back into their habitual listlessness, under which they so often complain of their fate, and speak of themselves as unfortunate and afflicted, that one would suppose them to be the victims of adversity, did not a more intimate acquaintance with their actual circumstances, convince us that they were surrounded by every thing conducive to rational comfort. For the sake of the poetry of the matter, one would scarcely deny to every young lady her little canker-worm to nurse in her bosom, since all must have their pets. But when they add selfishness to melancholy, and trouble their friends with their idle and fruitless complaints, the case becomes too serious for a jest. Indeed, I am not sure that the professing Christian, who rises every morning with a cherished distaste for the duties of the day, who turns away when they present themselves, under a belief that they are more difficult or more disgusting than the duties of other people, who regards her own allotment in the world as peculiarly hard, and never pours forth her soul in devout thanksgiving for the blessings she enjoys, is not in reality as culpable in the sight of God, and living as much at variance with the spirit of true religion, as the individual who spends the same portion of time in the practice of more open and palpable sin.

It is an undeniable improvement in modern education, that religious instruction is becoming more general, that pupils are questioned in the knowledge of the Scriptures, instructed in the truths of religion, and sent forth into the world prepared to give an answer respecting the general outlines of Christianity. So long, however, as the discontent above alluded to remains so prevalent, we must question the sufficiency of this method of instruction; and it is under a strong conviction, that to teach young people to talk about religion is but a small part of what is necessary to the establishment of their

Christian characters, that I have ventured to put forth what may be regarded as crude remarks upon this important subject.

I still cling fondly to the hope, that, ere long, some system of female instruction will be discovered, by which the young women of England may be sent home from school prepared for the stations appointed them by Providence to fill in after life, and prepared to fill them well. Then indeed may this favored country boast of her privileges, when her young women return to their homes and their parents, habituated to be on the watch for every opportunity of doing good to others; making it the first and the last inquiry of every day, "What can I do to make my parents, my brothers, or my sisters, more happy? I am but a feeble instrument in the hands of Providence, to work out any of his benevolent designs; but as he will give me strength, I hope to pursue the plan to which I have been accustomed, of seeking my own happiness only in the happiness of others."

CHAPTER IV.

DRESS AND MANNERS.

THAT the extent of woman's influence is not always commensurate with the cultivation of her intellectual powers, is a truth which the experience and observation of every day tend to confirm; for how often do we find that a lavish expenditure upon the means of acquiring knowledge is productive of no adequate result in the way of lessening the sum of human misery!

When we examine the real state of society, and single out the individuals whose habits, conversation, and character produce the happiest effect upon their fellow-creatures, we invariably find them persons who are *morally*, rather than intellectually, great; and consequently the profession of genius is, to a woman, a birthright of very questionable value. It is a remark, not always charitably made, but unfortunately too true, that the most tal-

ented women are not the most agreeable in their domestic capacity: and frequent and unsparing are the batteries of sarcasm and wit, which consequently open upon our unfortunate *blues*! It should be remembered, however, that the evil is not in the presence of one quality, but in the absence of another; and we ought never to forget the redeeming excellence of those signal instances, in which the moral worth of the female character is increased and supported by intellectual power. If, in order to maintain a beneficial influence in society, superior talent, or even a high degree of learning, were required, solitary and insignificant would be the lot of some of the most social, benevolent, and noble-hearted women, who now occupy the very centre of attraction within their respective circles, and claim from all around them a just and appropriate tribute of affection and esteem.

It need scarcely be repeated, that although great intellectual attainments are by no means the highest recommendation that a woman can possess, the opposite extreme of ignorance, or natural imbecility of mind, are effectual barriers to the exercise of any considerable degree of influence in society. An ignorant woman who has not the good sense to keep silent, or a weak woman pleased with her own prattle, are scarcely less annoying than humiliating to those who, from acquaintance or family connection, have the misfortune to be identified with them: yet it is surprising how far a small measure of talent, or of mental cultivation, may be made to extend in the way of giving pleasure, when accompanied with good taste, good sense, and good feeling, especially with that feeling which leads the mind from self and selfish motives, into an habitual regard to the good and happiness of others.

The more we reflect upon the subject, the more we must be convinced, that there is a system of discipline required for women, totally distinct from what is called the learning of the schools, and that, unless they can be prepared for their allotment in life by some process calculated to fit them for per-

forming its domestic duties, the time bestowed upon their education will be found, in after life, to have been wholly inadequate to procure for them either habits of usefulness, or a healthy tone of mind.

It would appear from a superficial observation of the views of domestic and social duty about to be presented, that, in the estimation of the writer, the great business of a woman's life was to make herself agreeable; for so minute are some of the points which properly engage her attention, that they scarcely seem to bear upon the great object of doing good. Yet when we reflect that by giving pleasure in an innocent and unostentatious manner, innumerable channels are opened for administering instruction, assistance, or consolation, we cease to regard as insignificant the smallest of those means by which a woman can render herself an object either of affection or disgust.

First, then, and most familiar to common observation, is her personal appearance; and in this case, vanity, more potent in woman's heart than selfishness, renders it an object of general solicitude to be so adorned as best to meet and gratify the public taste. Without inquiring too minutely into the motive, the custom, as such, must be commended: for, like many of the minor virtues of women, though scarcely taken note of in its immediate presence, it is sorely missed when absent. A careless or slatternly woman, for instance, is one of the most repulsive objects in creation; and such is the force of public opinion in favor of the delicacies of taste and feeling in the female sex, that no power of intellect, or display of learning, can compensate to men, for the want of nicety or neatness in the women with whom they associate in domestic life. In vain to them might the wreath or laurel wave in glorious triumph over locks uncombed; and wo betide the heroine, whose stocking, even of the deepest blue, betrayed a lurking hole!

It is, however, a subject too serious for jest, and ought to be regarded by all women with earnest solicitude, that they may constantly maintain in their own persons that

strict attention to good taste and delicacy of feeling, which affords the surest evidence of delicacy of mind; a quality without which no woman ever was, or ever will be, charming. Let her appear in company with what accomplishments she may, let her charm by her musical talents, attract by her beauty, or enliven by her wit, if there steal from underneath her graceful drapery, the soiled hem, the tattered frill, or even the coarse garment out of keeping with her external finery, imagination naturally carries the observer to her dressing-room, her private habits, and even to her inner mind, where it is almost impossible to believe that the same want of order and purity does not prevail.

It is a prevalent but most injurious mistake, to suppose that all women must be splendidly and expensively dressed, to recommend themselves to general approbation. In order to do this, how many, in the sphere of life to which these remarks apply, are literally destitute of comfort, both in their hearts and in their homes; for the struggle between parents and children, to raise the means on one hand, and to obtain them either by argument or subterfuge on the other, is but one among the many sources of family discord and individual suffering, which mark out the excess of artificial wants, as the great evil of the present times.

A very slight acquaintance with the sentiments and tone of conversation familiar among men, might convince all whose minds are open to conviction, that *their* admiration is not to be obtained by the display of any kind of extravagance in dress. There may be occasional instances of the contrary, but the praise most liberally and uniformly bestowed by men upon the dress of women, is, that it is neat, becoming, or in good taste.

The human mind is often influenced by association, while immediate impression is all that it takes cognizance of at the moment. Thus a splendidly dressed woman entering the parlor of a farm-house, or a tradesman's drawing-room, bursts upon the sight as an astounding and almost monstrous spectacle; and we are scarcely aware that the repulsion

we instantaneously experience, arises from a secret conviction of how much the gorgeous fabric must have cost the wearer, in time, and thought, and money; especially when we know that the same individual is under the necessity of spending her morning hours in culinary operations, and is, or ought to be, the sharer of her husband's daily toil.

There is scarcely any object in art or nature, calculated to excite our admiration, which may not, from being ill-placed, excite our ridicule or disgust. Each individual article of clothing worn by this woman, may be superb in itself, but there is a want of fitness and harmony in the whole, from which we turn away.

Perhaps there are no single objects in themselves so beautiful as flowers, and it might seem difficult to find a situation in which they could be otherwise; yet I have seen—and seen with a feeling almost like pity—at the conclusion of a feast, fair rose-leaves and sweet jessamine floating amidst such inappropriate elements, that all their beauty was despoiled, and they were fit only to be cast away with the refuse of gross matter in which they were involved.

Admiration of a beautiful object, how intense soever it may be, cannot impart that high tone of intellectual enjoyment which arises from our admiration of fitness and beauty combined; and thus the richest silk, and the finest lace, when inappropriately worn, are beautifully manufactured articles, but nothing more. While, therefore, on the one hand, there is a moral degradation in the consciousness of wearing soiled or disreputable garments, or being in any way below the average of personal decency, there is, on the other, a gross violation of good taste, in assuming for the middle classes of society, whose occupations are closely connected with the means of bodily subsistence, the same description of personal ornament as belongs with more propriety to those who enjoy the luxury of giving orders, without any necessity for further occupation of time and thought.

The most frequently recurring perplexities

of woman's life arise from cases which religion does not immediately reach, and in which she is still expected to decide properly and act agreeably, without any other law than that of good taste for her guide. Good taste is therefore most essential to the regulation of her dress and general appearance; and wherever any striking violation of this principle appears, the beholder is immediately impressed with the idea that a very important rule of her life and conduct is wanting. It is not all who possess this guide within themselves; but an attentive observation of human life and character, especially a due regard to the beauty of fitness, would enable all to avoid giving offence in this particular way.

The regard to fitness here recommended, is a duty of much more serious importance than would at first sight appear, since it involves a consideration which cannot too often be presented to the mind, of what, and who we are!—what is the station we are appointed to fill, and what the objects for which we are living?

Behold yon gorgeous fabric in the distance, with its rainbow hues, and gems, and shining drapery,

"And flowers the fairest, that might feast the bee."

A coronet of beauty crowns the whole, and feathery ornaments, on frail silvery threads, glitter and wave, and tremble at every moving breath. Surely the countenance of Flora blooms below, and Zephyrus suspends his gentle wings at her approach. The spectacle advances. It is not health, nor youth, nor beauty that we see; but poor, decrepit, helpless, miserable old age. We gaze, and a shudder comes over us, for Death is grinning in the background, and we hear his voice triumphantly exclaiming, "This is mine!"

Look at that moving garden, and those waving plumes, as they pass along the aisle of the church or the chapel. They form the adornment of a professedly Christian woman, the mother of a family; and this is the day appointed for partaking of that ordinance to which Christians are invited to come in meek-

ness and lowliness of spirit, to commemorate the love of their Redeemer, who, though he was rich, for their sakes became poor—who humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, to purchase their exemption from the penalty of sin, and the bondage of the world.

We would earnestly hope that, in the greater number of such cases as these, the error is in the judgment—the mockery thoughtlessly assumed: but would not the habit of self-examination, followed up by serious inquiry respecting our real and individual position in society, as moral agents, and immortal beings, be a likely means of averting the ridicule that age is ill prepared to bear; and, what is of infinitely more consequence, of preventing the scandal that religion has too much cause to charge upon her friends?

It frequently happens that women in the middle class of society are not entirely free from provincialisms in their manner of speaking, as well as other peculiarities, by which it may easily be discovered that their interests are local, and their means of information of limited extent; in short, that they are persons who have but little acquaintance with the polite or fashionable world, and yet they may be persons highly estimable and important in their own sphere. Very little either of esteem or importance, however, attaches to their characters, where their ingenuity is taxed to maintain what they believe to be a fashionable or elegant exterior, and which, in connection with their unpolished dialect and homely occupations, renders them but too much like the chimney-sweeper's queen decked out for a May-day exhibition. The invidious question unavoidably occurs to the beholder—for what or for whom has such a person mistaken herself? while, had she been dressed in a plain substantial costume, corresponding with her mind and habits, she might have been known at once, and respected for what she really was,—a rational, independent, and valuable member of society.

It is not, by any means, the smallest of the services required by Christian charity, to point out to our fellow-countrywomen how

they may avoid being ridiculous. Perhaps a higher degree of intellectual dignity would raise us all above the weakness of being moved to laughter by so slight a cause. But such is the constitution of the general order of minds, that they are less entertained by the most pointed witticisms, than by those striking contrasts and discrepancies, which seem to imply that rusticity has mistaken itself for elegance, deformity for beauty, age for youth. I pretend not to defend this propensity to turn so serious a mistake into jest. I merely say that such a propensity does exist, and, what is among the anomalies of our nature, that it sometimes exhibits itself most unreservedly in the very individuals who in their turn are furnishing food for merriment to others.

The laughing philosopher might have reasoned thus, "Let them all laugh on, they will cure each other." But the question is—does ridicule correct the evil? Most assuredly it does not. It does something more, however. It rankles like a poison in the bosom where it falls, and destroys the peace of many an amiable but ill-judging candidate for public admiration. Women, especially, are its victims and its prey; and well do they learn, under the secret tutelage of envy, jealousy, and pride, how to make this engine of discord play upon each other.

When we listen to the familiar conversation of women, especially of those whose minds are tainted by vulgarity, and unenlightened by the higher principles of religion, we find that a very large portion of their time and attention is bestowed upon the subject of dress—not of their own dress merely, but of that of their neighbors; and looking further, we find, what is more astonishing, that there exists in connection with the same subject, a degree of rivalry and ambition which call forth many of the evil passions that are ever ready to spring into action, and mar the pleasant pictures of social life. In awakening these, the ridicule already alluded to is a powerful agent; for, like the most injurious of libels, it adheres so nearly to the truth, as to set contradiction at defiance.

Thus, there are few persons who would not rather be maligned than ridiculed; and thus the wounds inflicted by ridicule are the most difficult to heal, and the last to be forgiven.

Surely, then, it is worth paying regard to the principles of fitness and consistency, in order to avoid the consequences necessarily resulting from every striking deviation from these rules; and the women of England possess many advantages in the cultivation of their natural powers of discrimination and reason, for enabling them to ascertain the precise position of this line of conduct, which it is so important to them to observe. They are free from many of the national prejudices entertained by the women of other countries, and they enjoy the inestimable privilege of being taught to look up to a higher standard of morals, for the right guidance of their conduct. It is to them, therefore, that we look for what rational and useful women ought to be, not only in the essentials of Christian character, but in the minor points of social, domestic, and individual duty.

Much that has been said on the subject of dress, is equally applicable to that of manners. Fitness and adaptation, are here, as well as in the former instance, the general rule; for of what value is elegance in a cottage, or the display of animal strength at a European court?

In the middle walks of life, an easy manner, free from affectation on the one hand, and grossness on the other, is all that is required; and such are, or *ought to be*, the occupations of all women of this class, as most happily to induce such habits of activity and free-agency, as would effectually preserve them from the two extremes of coldness and frivolous absurdity.

The grand error of the day seems to be, that of calling themselves *ladies*, when it ought to be their ambition to be *women*,—women who fill a place, and occupy a post—members of the commonwealth—supporters of the fabric of society,—the minor wheels and secret springs of the great machine of human life and action, which cannot move harmoniously, nor with full effect to the ac-

complishment of any great or noble purpose, while clogged with the lovely burdens, and impeded by the still-life attitudes of those useless members of the community, who cast themselves about on every hand, in the vain hope of being valued and admired for doing nothing.

Among the changes introduced by modern taste, it is not the least striking, that all the daughters of trades-people, when sent to school, are no longer girls, but young ladies. The linen-draper whose worthy consort occupies her daily post behind the counter, receives her child from Mrs. Montague's establishment—a young lady. At the same elegant and expensive seminary, music and Italian are taught to Hannah Smith, whose father deals in Yarmouth herrings; and there is the butcher's daughter, too, perhaps the most lady-like of them all. The manners of these young ladies naturally take their tone and character from the ridiculous assumptions of modern refinement. The butcher's daughter is seized with nausea at the spectacle of raw meat—Hannah Smith is incapable of existing within the atmosphere of her father's home—and the child of the linen-draper elopes with a merchant's clerk, to avoid the dire necessity of assisting in her father's shop.

What a catalogue of miseries might be made out, as the consequence of this mistaken ambition of the women of England to be ladies! Gentlewomen they may be, and refined women too; for when did either gentleness or true refinement disqualify a woman for her proper duties? But that assumption of delicacy which unfits them for the real business of life, is more to be dreaded in its fatal influence upon their happiness, than the most agonizing disease with which they could be afflicted.

It is needless to say that women of this morbid, imbecile character have no influence. They are so occupied with the minutiae of their own personal miseries, that they have no time to think of the sin and the sorrow existing in the world around them. Whatever is proposed to them in the way of doing

good, is sure to meet with a listless, weary, murmuring denial; for if the hundred-and-one objections, arising out of other fancied causes, should be obviated, there are their endless and inexhaustible nerves. Alas, alas! that English women should ever have found themselves out to be possessed of nerves! Not the most exquisite creation of the poet's fancy was ever supposed to be more susceptible of pain than is now the highly-educated young lady, who reclines upon a couch in an apartment slightly separated from that in which her father sells his goods, and but one remove from the sphere of her mother's culinary toil.

How different from this feeble, discontented, helpless thing, is the woman who shows by her noble bearing that she knows her true position in society; and who knows also, that the virtue and the value attaching to her character must be in exact proportion to the benefit she confers upon her fellow-creatures;—above all, who feels that the only Being who is capable of knowing what is ultimately best, has seen meet to place her exactly where the powers of her mind and the purposes of her life may be made most conducive to his merciful and wise designs! Not the meanest habiliments, nor the most homely personal aspect, can conceal the worth and the dignity of such a woman; and whatever that position with which she has made herself so well acquainted may be, she will find that her influence extends to its remotest circle.

It is impossible to say what the manners of such a woman are. In the cottage, in the court, in the daily and hourly performance of social services, they are, and must be, characterized by the same attributes—general adaptation supported by dignity, a high sense of duty predominating over every tendency to selfish indulgence, and prompting to the performance of every kind of practical good, a degree of self-respect, without which no talent can be matured, and no purpose rendered firm; yet, along with this, a far higher degree of respect for others, exhibited in modes of deference, and acts of considera-

tion as various as the different characters whose good or whose happiness are the subjects of her care ; and, lastly, that sweet sister of benevolence, *charity*, without which no woman ever yet could make herself a desirable companion or friend.

It may be said that these are virtues, not modes of conduct ; but how much of virtue, particularly that of charity, may be implied and understood by what is commonly called *manner* ! That which in the present day is considered the highest attainment in this branch of conduct, is a lady-like manner, and it is one that well deserves the attention of all who wish to recommend themselves—who wish, as all must do, to ward off insulting familiarity, and court respectful consideration. There are, however, many impressions conveyed to the minds of others by mere manner, far exceeding this in interest and importance. What, for instance, is so consoling to the afflicted as a sympathizing manner ? The direct expression of sympathy might possibly give pain ; but there is a manner, and happy are they who possess it, which conveys a silent invitation to the sorrowing soul to unburden its griefs, with an assurance that it may do so without fear of treachery or unkindness. There seems to be an instinct in our nature by which this mode of expressing sympathy is rendered intelligible ; and who that has any thing to do with sorrow or suffering, or any wish to alleviate the pressure of either, would not desire that their manner should be so fraught with sympathy as to impart the consolation they may be unable to express in words ?

Who, on the other hand, in a world which all the afflicted are disposed to consider cold and unfeeling, has not felt what it was, to meet with that peculiar tone of voice, that long, earnest gaze of the eye, and that watchfulness of personal comfort, which belong to a degree of interest deeper than can be told, and which convince beyond the power of language, that we are not—we cannot be overlooked or forgotten ? How many an alien has been invited to return by a look, a tone, a gesture, when no power of speech

would have conveyed the same impression of a welcome ! How many a prejudice has been overcome—how many a dangerous resolution broken—how many a dark design defeated by a conciliating and confiding manner ? And may it not also be asked, how many an insult has been repelled by a manner fraught with dignity ; how many an injury has been returned into the bosom where it originated, by a manner which conveyed all the bitterness of cherished and determined revenge ?

To those who make the human mind their study, the mode of acting is of more importance than the action itself ; and to women it is especially so, because the sphere in which they actually move is comparatively limited and obscure. It is seldom regarded as consistent with that delicacy which forms so great a charm in their nature, that they should act out to their full extent all the deep feelings of which they are capable. Thus there is no other channel for their perpetual overflow, than that of their manners ; and thus a sensitive and ingenuous woman can exhibit much of her own character, and lead others out into the display of much of theirs, simply by the instrumentality of her manners ; and, upon the same principle, that good breeding which obtains the highest applause in society, is but an imitation or assumption of every moral excellence, depicted on a minor scale.

Good manners are the small-coin of virtue, distributed abroad as an earnest—we will not ask how fallacious—of the greater and better things that lie beyond. The women of England are becoming increasingly solicitous about their manners, that they may in all points resemble such as prevail in a higher circle of society, and be, consequently, the best. But would it not be more advantageous to them, to bestow the same increase of solicitude upon what constitutes the true foundation of all that is amiable and excellent in life and conduct ? Would it not be more advantageous to them to remember, that in the sphere of life appointed for them to fill, stronger and more efficient traits of

character are required, than can possibly be classed under the epithet of *lady-like*? Not that coarseness or vulgarity of manner could ever be tolerated in those delicate intimacies, and intellectual associations, which properly belong to the class of women of whom England had once a right to boast—intimacies and associations, intervening like gleams of sunshine, between their seasons of perplexity and care; but the manners I would earnestly recommend to my countrywomen, are of a character calculated to convey an idea of much more than refinement; they are manners to which a high degree of moral influence belongs, inasmuch as they inspire confidence, command esteem, and contribute to the general sum of human happiness.

Adaptation is the leading feature in this class of manners—adaptation not only to the circumstances of the person who acts and speaks, but also to the circumstances of those upon whom such speech or action operates. A light, careless, sportive manner is sometimes thought exceedingly charming; and when it emanates from youth and innocence, can scarcely fail to please; but when such a manner is *affected* by a woman of ponderous personal weight, of naturally grave countenance, and responsible station in society, none can avoid being struck with the obvious anomaly, and few can avoid being moved to laughter or contempt.

In English society it frequently happens that persons of humble parentage, and homely station, in early life, are raised, by the acquisition of wealth, to the enjoyment of luxurious indulgence. How absurd in such cases, is that assumption of delicacy and of aristocratic dignity which we too often see, and which is sure to give rise to every variety of uncharitable remark upon what they and their families have been!

Self-importance, or rather a prevailing consciousness of self, is the most universal hindrance to the attainment of agreeable manners. A woman of delicate feelings and cultivated mind, who goes into company determined to be interested, rather than to interest, can scarcely fail to please. We are

assured, however, that in this respect there is something very defective in the present state of society. All desire to make an impression, none to be impressed; and thus the social intercourse of every day is rendered wearisome, if not disgusting, by the constant struggle of each contending party to assume the same relative position.

An instance relating immediately to an animal of inferior grade in the creation to man, but bearing some affinity to the case in point, is told by a traveller, whose party having shot several old monkeys, took home their young ones to the camp where he was stationed. He amused himself in the evening by watching these little animals, which had been so accustomed to be caressed and carried about by their parents, that they expected the same services from each other, and by their persevering efforts to obtain assistance from those who in an equal degree required it from them, formed themselves into a tumultuous heap, and nearly worried each other to death.

It might be invidious to compare the tumult of feeling, the weariness, and the fatality to happiness experienced by these animals, to that which is produced by the general desire to make an impression, in modern society; but none can be blind to the fact, that a determination to be pleased in company, is the surest means of giving pleasure, as well as of receiving it.

A young lady who has not had an opportunity of conversing, of playing, or of showing off in any other way, is almost sure to return from an evening party complaining of its dullness, and discontented with herself, as well as with every one besides. Ask her if such and such agreeable and intelligent persons were not present; and she answers, "Yes." Ask her if they did not converse, and converse pleasantly; and still she answers, "Yes." What then? The fact is, she has *herself* made no impression, charmed nobody, and therefore, as a necessary consequence, she is not charmed.

How much more happiness does that woman experience, who, when in company, di-

rects her attention to her nearest neighbor ; and, beholding a cheerful countenance, or hearing a pleasant voice, is encouraged to proceed in cultivating an acquaintance, which may ultimately ripen into friendship, may teach her some useful lesson, or raise her estimate of her fellow-creatures. Even where no such agreeable results are experienced, where the party attempted proves wholly impracticable, there is still a satisfaction in having made the trial, far beyond what can be experienced by any defeated attempt to be agreeable. Indeed the disappointment of having failed to make a pleasing impression merely for the purpose of gratifying our own vanity, without reference to the happiness of others, is adapted in an especial manner to sour the temper, and depress the mind ; because we feel along with the disappointment, a mortifying consciousness that our ambition has been of an undignified and selfish kind ; while, if our endeavor has been to contribute to the general sum of social enjoyment, by encouraging the diffident, cultivating the acquaintance of the amiable, and stimulating latent talent, we cannot feel depressed by such a failure, nor mortified at our want of success.

The great question with regard to modern education is, which of these two classes of feeling does it instil into the mind—does it inspire the young women of the present day with an amiable desire to make everybody happy around them ? or does it teach them only to sing, and play, and speak in foreign languages, and consequently leave them to be the prey of their own disappointed feelings, whenever they find it impossible to make any of these qualifications tell upon society.

CHAPTER V.

CONVERSATION OF THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND.

It may not, perhaps, be asking too much of the reader, to request that gentle person-

age to bear in mind, that in speaking both of the characteristics and the influence of a certain class of females, strict reference has been maintained, throughout the four preceding chapters, to such as may with justice be denominated *true* English women. With puerile exotics, bending from their own feebleness, and wandering, like weeds, about the British garden to the hindrance of the growth of all useful plants, this work has little to do, except to point out how they might have been cultivated to better purpose.

I have said of English women, that they are the best fireside companions ; but I am afraid that my remark must apply to a very small portion of the community at large. The number of those who are wholly destitute of the highest charm belonging to social companionship, is lamentably great : and these pages would never have been obtruded upon the notice of the public, if there were not strong symptoms of the number becoming greater still.

Women have the choice of many means of bringing their principles into exercise, and of obtaining influence, both in their own domestic sphere, and in society at large. Among the most important of these is *conversation* ; an engine so powerful upon the minds and characters of mankind in general, that beauty fades before it, and wealth in comparison is but as leaden coin. If match-making were indeed the great object of human life, I should scarcely dare to make this assertion, since few men choose women for their conversation, where wealth or beauty are to be had. I must, however, think more nobly of the female sex, and believe them more solicitous to maintain affection after the match is made, than simply to be led to the altar, as wives whose influence will that day be laid aside with their wreaths of white roses, and laid aside forever.

If beauty or wealth have been the bait in this connection, the bride may gather up her wreath of roses, and place them again upon her polished brow ; nay, she may bestow the treasures of her wealth without reserve, and permit the husband of her choice to

"spoil her goodly lands to gild his waste;" she may do what she will—dress, bloom, or descend from affluence to poverty; but if she has no intellectual hold upon her husband's heart, she must inevitably become that most helpless and pitiable of earthly objects—a slighted wife.

Conversation, understood in its proper character, as distinct from mere talk, might rescue her from this. Not conversation upon books, if her husband happens to be a fox-hunter; nor upon fox-hunting, if he is a book-worm; but exactly that kind of conversation which is best adapted to his tastes and habits, yet at the same time capable of leading him a little out of both into a wider field of observation, and subjects he may never have derived amusement from before, simply from the fact of their never having been presented to his notice.

How pleasantly the evening hours may be made to pass, when a woman who really can converse, will thus beguile the time! But, on the other hand, how wretched is the portion of that man who dreads the dulness of his own fireside—who sees the clog of his existence ever seated there—the same, in the deadening influence she has upon his spirits, to-day, as yesterday, to-morrow, and the next day, and the next! Welcome, thrice welcome, is the often-invited visitor, who breaks the dismal dual of this scene.

Married women are often spoken of in high terms of commendation for their personal services, their handiwork, and their domestic management; but I am inclined to think that a married woman, possessing all these, and even beauty too, yet wanting conversation, might become "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable," in the estimation of her husband; and, finally, might drive him from his home by the leaden weight of her uncompanionable society.

I know not whether other minds have felt the same as mine under the pressure of some personal presence without fellowship of feeling. Innocent and harmless the individual may be who thus inflicts the grievance, yet there is an irksomeness in their mere bodily

presence almost intolerable to be borne; and in proportion to the estimate we form of real society, and companionship, and sympathy of feeling, is the dread we entertain of association with mere animal life in its human form, while nothing of this fellowship of feeling is experienced.

There cannot, however, be a greater mistake in the science of being agreeable, than to suppose that conversation must be made a business of. Oh! the misery of being pitted against a professional converser!—one who looks from side to side until a vacant ear is found, and commences a battery of declamation if you will not answer, and of argument if you will. Indeed, the immense variety of annoyances deducible from ill-managed conversation, are a sufficient proof of its importance in society; and any one disposed to dispute this fact, need only recall the many familiar instances of disappointment and chagrin which all who mix in any manner with what is called the world, must have experienced, from mistaken views of what is agreeable in conversation.

It would be vain to attempt an enumeration of the different aspects under which this peculiar kind of annoyance presents itself. A few heads will be sufficient, under which to range the different classes of injudicious talkers. First, then, we naturally think of those who have obtained the conventional appellation of *boreds*, or, to describe them more politely, the class of talkers whose over-solicitude is proportioned to their difficulty in obtaining patient hearers. These, again, may be subdivided into endless varieties, of which a few specimens will suffice. Yet among all these, even the most inveterate, may be found worthy individuals, whose qualifications for imparting both instruction and amusement are by no means contemptible.

Entitled to distinction in the art of annoyance are the hobby-riders—those who not only ride a favorite hobby themselves, but expect every one they meet with to mount and ride the same. It matters not whether their ruling subject be painting or politics,

except that minds devoted to the fine arts have generally about them some delicacy as to the reception of their favorites, and are too shrinkingly alive to the slights it may receive, to risk its introduction without some indication of a welcome. Still there are exceptions even to this rule, and nothing can be more wearisome to the uninitiated, or more unintelligible to the unpractised ear, than the jargon poured forth by an amateur painter without regard to the tastes or the understandings of those around him.

Perhaps his fellow-traveller is seated on some gentle eminence, drinking in the deep quiet of a summer's evening, not merely from sight, but sound, and blending all with treasured memories of the past, in which no stranger could intermeddle, when the painter bursts upon him with his technicalities, and the illusion is gone. He raves about the *breadth* of the coloring. His companion sees the long tall shadows of the trees reflected on the sloping green, with the golden sunset gleaming in between the stems, and through the interstices of the foliage, and he knows not where the poetry or even the truth of this wonderful property of breadth can be. The painter descants upon the *bringing out* of the distant cottage from the wood. His companion is of opinion it would be better to let it remain where it is—half hid in the retirement of the forest, and sending up, as it seems, from the very bosom of the silent shade, its wreath of curling smoke, to indicate the social scene beneath its rustic roof, prepared for by the lighting of the woodman's fire. But the painter is not satisfied. He calls upon his friend to observe the *grouping* of the whole. He must have the outline broken. The thing is done. His sketch is exhibited in triumph, and he raves on with accelerated delight; for he has cleft the hills in twain, and placed a group of robbers on the broken ground. Alas! how should his companion believe or understand! His thoughts are expatiating upon that scene, because its sloping hills, and cultivated fields, and gardens and orchards and village churchyard, are like the spot where he was born,

and where his father died; and he sees no mountain gorge, nor bandit chief, nor hears the rush of torrents on the breeze; but his eye dwells again upon the apple-tree in its spring bloom, and the lambs upon the lea, and his ear is open to the cooing of the wood-pigeon on the chestnut boughs, and the sound of voices—than all other sounds more sweet—the voices that spoke kindly of his childhood.

It might be supposed that, if under any circumstances the society of a painter could be always welcome, it would be among the varied scenes of a picturesque tour. But even here the mind has pictures of its own, and he who is perpetually telling you what to see, might as well force upon you at every view, the use of his camera lucida, and neither allow you to gaze upon nature as you wish to behold it, nor as it really is.

Women are, perhaps, less addicted than men to annoy others with their pet subjects; because they have less opportunity of following out any particular branch of art or study, to the exclusion of others; and politics, that most prevalent and unceasing absorbent of conversation, is seldom a favorite theme with them. They have, however, their houses and their servants, and, what is infinitely worse—they have *themselves*.

Perhaps accustomed to a little private admiration in a remote corner of the world, they obtain a false estimate of their own importance, and act as if they thought no subject so interesting as that which turns upon their own experience, their own peculiarities, or even their own faults. It does not always follow that such women admire themselves so much as the prevalence of self in their conversation would at first lead us to suppose, for in expatiating upon the good qualities of others, they often exclaim—and why should we doubt their sincerity?—how much they wish they were like the beings they extol! They will even speak disparagingly of themselves, and tell of their own faults without occasion; but even while they do this with an air of humility, they seldom fail to leave an impression on the minds of their hearers, that in reality they

like their own faults better than the virtues of others.

It is not of much consequence what is the nature of the subject proposed to the attention of this class of talkers. If the weather: "It does not agree with me, *I* like the wind from the west." If the politics of the country in which they live: "*I* have not given much attention to politics, nor do I think that women should." If any moral quality in the abstract is discussed: "Oh, that is just my fault!" or, "If *I* possess any virtue, I do think it is that." If an anecdote is related: "That is like [or not like] *me*. *I* should [or should not] have done the same." If the beauty of any distant place is described: "*I* never was there, but my uncle once was within ten miles of it: and had it not been for the miscarriage of a letter, I should have been his companion on that journey. My uncle was always fond of taking me with him. Dear good man, I was a great pet of his." If the lapse of time is the subject of conversation: "The character undergoes many changes in a few years. I wonder whether, or in what way, mine will be altered two years hence." If the moon: "How many people write sonnets to the moon! *I* never did."

And thus sun, moon, and stars—the whole created universe—are but links in that continuous chain which vibrates with perpetual music to the egotist, connecting all things in heaven and earth, however discordant or heterogeneous, by a perfect and harmonious union with self.

A very slight degree of observation would enable such individuals to perceive that as soon as self is put in the place of any of the subjects in question, conversation necessarily flags, as this topic, to say the least of it, cannot be familiar to both parties. On one side, therefore, nothing further remains to be said; for, however lovely the egotist may be in her own person, no man, or woman either, is prepared to have her substituted for the world in general, though it seems more than probable that the individual herself might not object to such a transposition.

Another class of annoying talkers, whose

claims to eminence in this line I am in no way disposed to contest, consists of the talkers of mere common-place—those who say nothing but what we could have said ourselves, had we deemed it worth our while, and who never on any occasion, or by any chance, give utterance to a new idea. Such people *will* talk. They seem to consider it their especial duty to talk, and no symptoms of inattention in their hearers, no impatient answer nor averted ear, nor even the interminable monotony of their own prattle, has the power to hush them into silence. If they fail in one thing, they try another; but, unfortunately for them, there is a transmuting medium in their own discourse, that would turn to dust the golden opinions of the wisest of men.

We naturally ask in what consists that objectionable common-place of which we complain, since the tenor of their conversation is not unlike the conversation of others. It is in reality *too* like, too much composed of the fillings-up of conversation in general. It has nothing distinctive in it, and, like certain letters we have seen, would answer the purpose as well if addressed to one individual as another.

The talker of common-place is always interested in the weather, which forms an all-sufficient resource when other subjects fail. One would think, from the frequency with which the individual remarks upon the rising of clouds, and the falling of rain, she was perpetually on the point of setting out on a journey. But she treats the seasons with the same respect, and loses no opportunity of telling the farmer who is silently suffering from a wet harvest, that the autumn has been unusually unpropitious. If you cough, she hopes you have not taken cold, but really colds are extremely prevalent. If you bring out your work, she admires both your industry and your taste, and assures you that rich colors are well thrown off by a dark ground. If books are the subject of conversation, she inquires whether you have read one that has just had a twelvemonth's run of popularity. She thinks that authors sometimes go a little too far, but concludes, with what appears in her

opinion to be a universal case, that much may be said on both sides. From books she proceeds to authors; expatiates upon the imagination of Shakspeare, and the strength of mind possessed by Hannah More; and deliberately inquires whether you do not agree with her in her sentiments respecting both. Nay, so far does reality exceed imagination, that I once heard a very sweet and amiable woman, whose desire to be at the same time both edifying and agreeable, somewhat outran her originality of thought, exclaim, in one of those pauses incident to conversation—"What an excellent book the Bible is!" Now, there is no gainsaying such an assertion, and it is almost equally impossible to assent. Conversation, therefore, always flags where common-place exists, because it elicits nothing, touches no answering chord, nor conveys any other idea than that of bare sound to the ear of the reluctant listener.

Another and most prolific source of annoyance is found among that class of persons who choose to converse on subjects interesting to themselves, without regard to time, or place, or general appropriateness. Whatever they take up, either as their ruling topic, or as one of momentary interest, is forced upon society, whether in season or out of season; and they often feel surprised and mortified that their favorite subjects, in themselves not unfrequently well chosen, are received by others with so cold a welcome. How many worthy individuals, whose minds are richly stored, and whose laudable desire is to disseminate useful knowledge, entirely defeat their own ends by this want of adaptation; and many whose conversation might be both amusing and instructive, from this cause seldom meet with a patient hearer.

Old people are peculiarly liable to this error; and it would be well to provide against the garrulity and wearisomeness of advanced age, by cultivating such powers of discrimination as would enable us habitually to discover what is acceptable, or otherwise, in conversation.

It occasionally happens that the mistress of a house, the kind hospitable mistress, who

has been at a world of pains to make everybody comfortable, is the very last person at the table, beside whom any of her guests would desire to be placed; because they know that being once linked in with her interminable chain of prattle, they will have no chance of escape until the ladies rise to withdraw; and there are few who would not prefer quietly partaking of her soups and sauces, to hearing them described. Women of this description, having tired out everybody at home, and taught every ear to turn away, are voracious of attention when they can command it, or even that appearance of it which the visitor politely puts on. Charmed with the novelty of her situation in having caught a hearer, she makes the most of him. Warming with her subject, and describing still more copiously, she looks into his face with an expression bordering on ecstasy; and were it not that she considerably spares him the task of a rejoinder, his situation would be as intolerable as the common routine of table-talk could make it.

In about the same class of agreeables with this good lady, might be placed the profuse teller of tales, whose natural flow of language and fertility of ideas leads her so far away from the original story, that neither the narrator nor the listener would be able to answer if suddenly inquired of—what the story was about. This is a very common fault among female talkers, whose versatility of mind and sensibility of feeling, render them peculiarly liable to be diverted from any definite object. It is only wonderful that the same quickness of apprehension does not teach them the impossibility of obtaining hearers on such terms.

Nor must we forget, among the abuses of conversation, the random talkers,—those who talk from impulse only, and rush upon you with whatever happens to be uppermost in their own minds, or most pleasing to their fancy at the time, without waiting to ascertain whether the individual they address is sad or merry,—at liberty to listen, or pre-occupied with some weightier and more interesting subject.

Whatever the topic of conversation, thus

obtruded upon society, may be, it is evident there must be a native obtuseness and vulgarity in the mind of the individual who thus offends, or she would wait before she spoke, to tune her voice to some degree of harmony with the feelings of those around her.

Thus far we have noticed only the trifling abuses of conversation, and of such we have, perhaps already, had more than enough; though the catalogue might easily be continued through as many volumes as it occupies pages here. There are other aspects more serious, under which the abuse of conversation must be contemplated; and the first of these is—as it relates to carelessness or design in exercising its power to give pain.

It is difficult to conceive that a deliberate desire to give pain could exist in any but the most malignant bosom; but habitual want of regard to what is painful to others, may easily be the cause of inflicting upon them real misery.

We have all observed—perhaps some of us felt, the sting of a taunting or an ill-timed jest; and never is the suffering it occasions, or the effect it produces, so much to be regretted, as when it wrings sharp tears from the gentle eyes of childhood. Ye know not what ye do, might well be said to those who thus burn up the blossoms of youth, and send back the fresh, warm current of feeling to stagnate at the heart.

It would be impossible, even if such were our object, always to discover exactly when we did give pain; but surely it would be a study well worthy of a benevolent and enlightened mind, to ascertain the fact with as much precision as we are capable of. What, for instance, do we feel on being called upon to sympathize with a young lady who is at the same moment pointed out to as one whose father a short time before had put an end to his existence, when the recollection simultaneously flashes upon us, that during the whole of the past evening, we engaged the attention of the very same young lady with a detailed account of the melancholy scenes we had sometimes witnessed in an insane asylum? Yet, neither the pain inflicted by such conversation is

greater, nor is its carelessness more culpable in us, than is that of a large portion of the ill-judged, random speeches we give utterance to every day.

Nor is it in common conversation that carelessness of giving pain is felt so much, as in the necessary duties of advising and finding fault. I am inclined to think no *very* agreeable way of telling people of their faults has ever yet been discovered; but certainly there is a difference, as great as that which separates light from darkness, between reproof judiciously and injudiciously administered. By carelessness in not regulating our tones and looks and manner when reproving others, we may convey either too much or too little meaning, and thus defeat our own purposes; we may even convey an impression the exact opposite of that designed, and awaken feelings of bitterness, revenge, and malignity in the mind of the individual we are solicitous to serve.

Let no one therefore presume to do good, either by instruction or advice, unless they have learned something of the human heart. It may appear, on the first view of the subject, a difficult and arduous study, but it is one that never can be begun too early or pursued too long. It is one also, in the pursuit of which women never need despair, as they possess the universal key of sympathy, by which all hearts may be unlocked,—some, it is true, with considerable difficulty, and some but partially at last; yet, if the key be applied by a delicate and skilful hand, there is little doubt but some measure of success will reward the endeavor.

We have said before, and we again repeat, it is scarcely possible to believe that beings constituted as women are—kindly affectioned, and tenderly susceptible of pain themselves—should be capable of wantonly and designedly inflicting pain upon others. Nature revolts from the thought. We look at the smile of beauty, and exclaim, "Impossible!" We pursue the benevolent visitant of the sick in her errands of mercy, and say, "It cannot be." Yet, after all, we fear it must be charged upon the female sex, that they do assist occa-

sionally in the circulation of petty scandal, and that it is not always from *carelessness* that they let slip the envenomed shaft, or speak daggers where they dare not use them. Nor are the speakers alone to blame. The hearers ought at least to participate, for if the habit of depreciating character were discountenanced in society, it would soon cease to exist, or exist only in occasional attempts, to be defeated as soon as made.

Few women have the hardihood to confess that they delight in this kind of conversation. But let the experiment be made in mixed society, of course not under the influence of true religious feeling, though perhaps the party might be such as would feel a little scandalized at being told they were not. Let a clever and sarcastic woman take the field, not, professedly, to talk against her neighbors on her own authority, but to throw in the hearsay of the day, by way of spice to the general conversation; giving to a public man his private stigma—to an author his unsaleable book—to the rich man his trading ancestry—to the poor, his unquestionable imprudence—to the beau, his borrowed plumes—and to the belle, her artificial bloom. We grant that this mass of poisoning matter thrown in at once, would be likely to offend the taste. It must, therefore, be skilfully proportioned, distributed with nice distinction, and dressed up with care. Will there not then be a large proportion of attentive listeners gathered round the speaker, smiling a ready assent to what they had themselves not dared to utter, and nodding as if in silent recognition of some fact they had previously been made acquainted with in a more private way?

Now all this while there may be seated in another part of the room, a person whose sole business is to tell the good she knows, believes, or has heard of others. She is not a mere relater of facts, but equally talented, shrewd, and discriminating with the opposite party, only she is restricted to the detail of what is good. I simply ask, for I wish not to pursue the subject further, Which of these talkers will be likely to obtain the largest group of listeners?

It is not, after all, by any consistent or determined attack upon character, that so much mischief is done, as by interlarding otherwise agreeable conversation with the sly hope of pretended charity—that certain things are not as they have been reported; or the kind wish that apparent merit was real, or might last.

English society is so happily constituted, that women have little temptation to any open vice. They must lose all respect for themselves, before they would venture so far to forget their respectability. But they have temptations as powerful to them, as open vice to others, and not the less so for being insidious. Who would believe that the passions of envy, hatred, and revenge could lurk within the gentle bosom over which those folds of dove-colored drapery are falling? The lady has been prevailed upon to sing for the amusement of the company. Blushing and hesitating, she is just about to be led to the place of exhibition, when another movement, in a distant part of the room, where her own advance was not observed, has placed upon the seat of honor, a younger, and perhaps more lovely woman; and she lays open the very piece of music which the lady in the dove-like color had believed herself the only person present who could sing. The musician charms the company. The next day, our dove hears of nothing but this exquisite performance; and at last she is provoked to say, "No wonder she plays so well, for I understand she does nothing else. Her mamma was ill the other day with a dreadful headache, and she played on, the whole afternoon, because she was going to a party in the evening, and wished to keep herself in practice."

Now, there is little in this single speech. It is almost too trifling for remark; but it may serve as a specimen of thousands, which are no determined falsehoods, nay, possibly, no falsehoods at all, and yet originate in feelings as diametrically opposed to Christian meekness, love, and charity, as are the malignant passions of envy, hatred, and revenge.

I must again repeat, that I know the evil exists not in this individual act, but in the state of the heart where it originates; yet I write thus earnestly about seeming trifles, because I believe few young persons are sufficiently alive to their importance: because I know that the minor morals of domestic life exercise a vital influence over the well-being of society; and because the peace of whole families is sometimes destroyed by the outward observance of religious duty not being supported by an equally strenuous observance of these delicate but essential points.

In studying the art, or rather the *duty* of being agreeable—a duty which all kindly-disposed persons will be anxious to observe—it is of importance to inquire, from whence originate the errors here specified, with the long catalogue that might follow in their train? So far as they are confined to misapprehension of what is really agreeable, they may be said to originate in the innate selfishness of our nature gaining the mastery over our judgment; beyond this, they originate in the evil propensities of the human heart, which when the influence of popular feeling operates against their exhibition in any gross and palpable form, infuse themselves, as it were, into the very current of our existence, and poison all our secret springs of feeling.

In order to correct the former, it is necessary that the judgment should be awakened. But as habits of selfishness, long indulged, involve the understanding in a cloud too dense to be altogether dispelled, it is the more important that youth should be so trained as to acquire habits of constant and unremitting mental reference to the feelings and characters of others; so that a quickness of perception, almost like intuitive knowledge, shall enable them to carry out the kindly purposes they are taught to cherish, into the delicate and minute affairs of life, and thus render them the means not only of giving pleasure, but of warding off pain.

It may appear a harsh conclusion to come to, that the little errors of conversation to which allusion has been made, and which are often conspicuous in what are called good

sort of people, really owe their existence to selfishness; but it should be remembered, that to this assertion the writer is far from adding, that those who act with more tact, and avoid such errors, are necessarily free from the same fault. There may be a refined as well as a gross selfishness, and both may be equal in their intensity and power.

But let us go back to the cases already specified. If the artist were not *habitually* more intent upon his own gratification than upon that of his companions, he would keep his hobby in the background, and allow himself time to perceive that the attention of his companion was pre-occupied by subjects more agreeable to him. The same may certainly be said of the more common fault of making *self* the ruling topic of conversation; and this applies with equal truth to self-depreciation as to self-praise.

The case is too clear and simple to need further argument. It must be the *habit* of acting from that first and most powerful impulse of our nature, and just pouring forth the fulness of our own hearts, discharging our own imagination of its load, and emptying the storehouse of our own memory, without regard to fitness or preparation in the soil upon which the seed may fall, or the harvest it is likely to produce, that renders conversation sometimes tasteless and rapid, and sometimes inexpressibly annoying.

The weightier responsibilities which attach to the talent of conversation, do not appear to fall directly within the compass of a work expressly devoted to the morals of domestic life. It is, however, a fact of great importance to establish, that a woman's *private* conversation—for in public they converse too much alike—is the surest evidence of her mind being imbued or not imbued with just and religious principles; that where it is uniformly trifling, there can be no predominating desire to promote the interests of religion in the world; and where, on the other hand, it is uniformly solemn and sedate, it is ill-calculated to recommend the course it would advocate with effect; that where it abounds in sarcasm, invective, and abuse, *even of what is*

erit, it never emanates from a mind in perfect unison with what is good; and that where it is always smooth, and sweet, and complacent, it must be deficient in one of the grand uses of conversation—its correction and reproof: finally, that where it is carried on in public or in private, without the least desire to elicit truth, to correct mistakes in relation or opinion, to establish principle, to disseminate useful knowledge, to warn of danger, or to perform that most difficult but most important of all duties—to correct the faults of friends—there must be something wrong at the heart's core, from whence this waste of words is flowing: and sad will be the final account, if, for each day of a lengthened existence upon earth, this great engine of moral good and evil has been thus performing its fruitless labor—for time, without an object; for eternity, without reward.

CHAPTER VI.

CONVERSATION.

It may appear somewhat paradoxical to commence a chapter on the uses of conversation, by pointing out the uses of being silent; yet such is the importance to a woman, of knowing exactly when to cease from conversation, and when to withhold it altogether, that the silence of the female sex seems to have become proverbially synonymous with a degree of merit almost too great to be believed in as a fact. There could be no agreeable conversation carried on, if there were no good listeners; and from her position in society, it is the peculiar province of a woman, rather to lead others out into animated and intelligent communication, than to be intent upon making communications from the resources of her own mind.

Besides this, there are times when men, especially if they are of moody temperament, are more offended, and annoyed by being talked to, than they could be by the greatest

personal affront from the same quarter; and a woman of taste will readily detect the forbidding frown, the close-shut lips, and the averted eye, which indicate a determination not to be drawn out. She will then find opportunity for the indulgence of those secret trains of thought and feeling which naturally arise in every human mind; and while she plies her busy needle, and sists quietly musing by the side of her husband, her father, or her brother, she may be adding fresh materials from the world of thought to that fund of conversational amusement, which she is ever ready to bring forward for their use.

By the *art* of conversation, therefore, as I am about to treat the subject in the present chapter, I would by no means be understood to mean the mere *act of talking*, but that cultivation and exercise of the conversational powers which is most conducive to social enjoyment, and most productive of beneficial influence upon our fellow-creatures.

I have already asserted of conversation, that it is a fruitful source of human happiness and misery, a powerful engine of moral good and evil, and few, I should suppose, would deny the truth of this assertion. Yet, notwithstanding the prevalence of this conviction, the art of conversation is seldom or never cultivated as a branch of modern education. It is true, the youthful mind is stimulated into early and immature expansion; and the youthful memory is stored with facts, but the young student, released from the trammels of school discipline, is thrown upon society in a state of total ignorance of the means of imparting her knowledge so as to render it available in raising the general tone of conversation; and the consequence mostly is, she is so engrossed by the new life into which she is suddenly introduced, and so occupied in learning what must be acquired before she can make any respectable figure in what is called society, that she closes the door upon the storehouse she has spent so many years of her life in filling; and finding little use for the materials accumulated there, is only known in after years to have had a good education, by hearing her occasionally

exclaim—"I learned all about that at school, but have entirely forgotten it since."

The English woman, whose peculiar part it is to blend all that is productive of benefit in her intellectual powers, with all that is conducive to happiness in her affections, would do well to give her attention as early as possible to the uses of conversation; and if a system could be formed for teaching some of the simple rules of conversation as an art, it would be found more advantageous to women in their social capacity, than many of the branches of learning which they now spend years in acquiring.

To converse by rule has indeed a startling sound, and few, we are apt to conclude, on a slight consideration of the subject, would recommend themselves by such a process. The same conclusion, however, is always rushed upon by the young genius who first begins to try her skill in the sister arts of painting and poetry, yet, in proceeding, she finds at every step, that there must be a rule, a plan, a system, or that genius, with all her profusion of materials, will be unable to form them into such a whole as will afford pleasure even to the most uninitiated.

I am aware I incur some risk of being charged both with ignorance and enthusiasm, when I express my belief that the art of conversation might in some measure be reduced to a system taught in our schools, and rendered an important part of female education; but I am not aware that my belief can be proved to be ill-founded until the experiment has been fairly tried.

Let an individual who has never heard of botany go forth into one of our English meadows in the month of June, and gaze upon the luxuriance of flowers, and leaves, and shooting stems, which there would meet his eye. Tell him that all these distinct and separate plants have been classed, and resolved into their appropriate orders, and he will exclaim, "Impossible! it cannot be."

I must allow that the case is not, strictly speaking, a similar one. There are difficulties of no trifling magnitude in reducing the faculties of the human mind to any thing

like order, and in laying down rules for the promotion of human happiness, except on the broad scale of moral philosophy. But let the two cases be fairly tried, and I am still unconvinced that the most apparently impracticable would not be attended with a measure of success.

If we consider the number of books that have been written on the subject of botany, the number of lectures that have been delivered, the number of years it has been taught, and the number of wise men who have made it their chief study; and if in comparison with a subject upon which such vast machinery of mind has been brought to operate, we do but mention that of Conversation, to which no one entire volume has, perhaps, ever yet been devoted, a smile of derision will most probably be the only notice our observation will excite.

I would not be understood to speak lightly of a knowledge of botany, or to depreciate the value of any other science. All I would maintain is this, that to know every thing that can be known in art and nature, is of little value to a woman, if she has not at the same time learned to communicate her knowledge in such a manner as to render it agreeable and serviceable to others.

A woman does not converse more agreeably, because she is able to define botanically the difference between a rose and a buttercup, though it may be desirable to be able to do so when asked; but because she has a quick insight into character, has tact to select the subjects of conversation best suited to her auditors, and to pursue them just so long as they excite interest, and engage attention.

With regard to the art of conversation, therefore, adaptation may be laid down as the primary rule—vivacity, or rather freshness, the second—and the establishment of a fact, or the deduction of a moral, the third.

Why should not the leisure hours at school be filled up by the practice of these rules, not only as a recreation, but as a pleasing art, in which it would be much to the advantage of every woman to excel? Why should not the mistress of the school devote her time

occasionally to the exercise of this art in the midst of her pupils, who might by her winning manners be invited in their turn to practise upon her? And why should not some plan be invented for encouraging the same exercise among the junior members of the establishment? Each girl, for instance, might be appointed for a day or a week, the converser with, or entertainer of, one of her fellow-students, taking all in rotation; so that in their hours of leisure it should be her business to devote herself to her companion, as it is that of a host to a guest. A report should then be given in at the expiration of the day or week, by the girl whose part it was to be conversed with, and by encouraging her to state whether she has been annoyed or interested, wearied or amused, in the presence of her companion, who should in her turn have the liberty of commending or complaining of her as an attentive or inattentive listener, a good or bad responder, such habits of candor and sincerity would be cultivated, as are of essential service in the formation of the moral character.

The practice of this art, as here recommended, would not necessarily be restricted in its operation to any particular number. Those who attained the greatest proficiency might extend their conversational powers to other members of the establishment; and thus might be constituted little amicable societies, in which all the faculties most likely to recommend the young students in their future association with the world, would be called into exercise, and rendered conducive to the general good.

To the class of women chiefly referred to in this work, it is perhaps most important that they should be able to converse with interest and effect. A large portion of their time is spent in the useful labor of the needle, an occupation which of all others requires something to vary its monotony, and render less irksome its seemingly interminable duration; they are frequently employed in nursing the sick, when appropriate and well-timed conversation may occasionally beguile the sufferer into forgetfulness of pain; and they

are also much at home—at their humble, quiet homes—where excitement from extraneous causes seldom comes, and where, if they are unacquainted with the art, and uninitiated in the practice of conversation, their days are indeed heavy, and their evenings worse than dull.

The women of England are not only peculiarly in need of this delightful relaxation to blend with their daily cares; but, until the late rapid increase of superficial refinement, they were adapted, by their habits and mode of life, for cultivating their conversational powers in a very high degree. Their time was not occupied by the artificial embellishments of polished life, they were thrown directly upon their own resources for substantial comfort, and thus they acquired a foundation of character which rendered their conversation sensible, original, and full of point. It is greatly to be apprehended that the increased facilities for imparting instruction in the present day, have not produced a proportionate increase in the facilities of conversing; and it is well worthy the attention of those who give their time and thoughts to the invention of improved means of disseminating knowledge, to inquire what is the best method of doing this by conversation as well as by books.

It is not, however, strictly speaking, in imparting a knowledge of general facts, that the highest use of conversation consists. General facts may be recorded in books, and books may be circulated to the remotest range of civilized society; but there are delicate touches of feeling too evanescent to bear the impress of any tangible character; there are mental and spiritual appliances, that must be immediate to be available; and who has not known the time when they would have given the wealth of worlds for the power to unburden their full hearts before the moment of acceptance should be gone, or the attentive ear be closed for ever?

The difficulty is seldom so great in knowing what ought to be said, as in knowing how to speak, what mode of expression would be most acceptable, or what turn the

conversation ought to take, so as best to introduce the point in question.

Nor is the management of the voice an unimportant branch of this art. There are never-to-be-forgotten tones, with which some cruel word has been accompanied, that have impressed themselves upon every heart; and there are also tones of kindness equally indelible, which had, perhaps, more influence at the time they were heard, than the language they were employed to convey. "It was not what she said, but the tone of voice in which she spoke," is the complaint of many a wounded spirit; and welcome and soothing to the listening ear is every tone that tells of hope and gladness.

There is scarcely any source of enjoyment more immediately connected at once with the heart and with the mind, than that of listening to a sensible and amiable woman when she converses in a melodious and well-regulated voice, when her language and pronunciation are easy and correct, and when she knows how to adapt her conversation to the characters and habits of those around her.

Women, considered in their distinct and abstract nature, as isolated beings, must lose more than half their worth. They are, in fact, from their own constitution, and from the station they occupy in the world, strictly speaking, relative creatures. If, therefore, they are endowed only with such faculties, as render them striking and distinguished in themselves, without the faculty of instrumentality, they are only as dead letters in the volume of human life, filling what would otherwise be a blank space, but doing nothing more.

All the knowledge in the world, therefore, without an easy and felicitous method of conveying it to others, would be but a profitless possession to a woman; while a very inferior portion of knowledge, with this method, might render her an interesting and delightful companion.

None need despair, then, if shut out by homely avocations, by straitened means, or by other unavoidable causes, from learning

all the lessons taught at school; for there are lessons to be learned at home, around the domestic hearth, and even in the obscurity of rural life, perhaps of more importance, in the summing-up of human happiness.

One of the popular uses of conversation is, to pass away time without being conscious of its duration; and, unworthy as this object unquestionably is, the fact that conversation is employed more than any other means for such a purpose, is a convincing proof of its importance and its power.

It is so natural to converse, that one of the severest punishments inflicted upon degraded human nature, is that of being denied the liberty of speech. How desirable is it, then, that what is done every hour in all classes of society, and under almost every variety of circumstance, should be done for some good purpose, and done in the best possible manner!

To converse well in company, is a point of ambition with many women, and few are insensible to the homage paid by the most sincere of all flatterers—a group of attentive listeners. So far as this talent enables a woman of elevated mind to give a higher tone to conversation in general, it is indeed a valuable gift; but that of being able to converse in an agreeable and appropriate manner in a sick-room, with an aged parent or distressed relative, or with a friend in delicate and trying circumstances, is a gift of far higher and more ennobling character.

I have already remarked, that attendance upon the sick is one of the most frequent and familiar, at the same time that it is one of the most sacred, of the duties devolving upon the class of women here described. It is much to be able, gently and skilfully, to smooth the pillow for the aching head, to administer the cordial draught, to guide the feeble steps, and to watch through the sleepless and protracted hours of night. But these are services rendered only to the suffering body. The mind—the unextinguishable mind, may all the while be sorely in need of the oil with which its waning lamp should still be trim-

med. And how shall this be administered? The practised nurses hired for the occasion make rude and ill-advised attempts to raise the drooping spirits of the patient by their vulgar pleasantries; books are too wearisome, and tell only of far-off and by-gone things, when the whole interest of the sufferer is concentrated into the present moment, and fixed upon himself.

It happens more frequently and more happily among the middle classes in England, that nurses and domestics cannot well be hired, and that the chief attention required by the patient devolves upon the females of the family. How differently in this case is the sufferer dealt with! There is no appearance of coming in expressly to converse with him; but while a gentle and kind-hearted woman steals with noiseless tread about the room, arranging every article of comfort, and giving to the whole apartment an air of refreshment or repose, she is watching every indication of an opening for conversation, that may beguile the lingering hours of their tediousness, and lead the sufferer to forget his pain. There are moments, even in seasons of sickness, when a little well-timed pleasantries is far from being unacceptable. She watches for these, and turns them to account, by going just so far in her playfulness, as the exhausted frame can bear without injury. When sympathy is called for, as it is on such occasions almost unceasingly, she yields it freely and fully, though not to any prolonged extent, as regards the case immediately under her care; but continuing the same tone and manner, and with evidently the same feeling, she speaks of other cases of suffering, of some friend or neighbor; and the more recent and immediate the instances, the more likely they will be to divert the mind of the patient from himself. These, of course, are not brought forward with any thing like a taunting insinuation that the patient is not worse than others, but simply as if her own mind was full of the impression they are calculated to excite; and by these means, suiting her voice and her countenance to the facts she is relating, she invests

them with an interest which even to the selfish invalid is irresistible.

Varying with every change in the temper and mood of the patient, her conversation assumes every variety that is calculated to please, always subdued and kept under by such delicate touches of feeling, such intense watchfulness, and such lively sensibility, that the faintest shadow cannot pass across the aching brow, nor the slightest indication of a smile across the lips, but it serves as an index for her either to change the subject of her discourse, to be silent or to proceed. There is along with all this a kindness in her voice which no pen was ever so eloquent as to describe; and there are moments of appealing weakness on the part of the invalid, when she pours forth the full tide of her affection in language that prosperity and health would never have taught her how to use.

Beyond these seasons of intercourse, however, and of far deeper value, are those in which the burdened soul of him who feels himself to be fast hastening to the confines of eternity, will sometimes seek a human ear for the utterance of its anxieties and fears, and appeal to a human heart for counsel in its hours of need. It may be that the individual has never been accustomed to converse on these subjects—knows not how to begin—and is ashamed to condemn, as he feels that he must do, the whole of his past life. Who then, but the friend who has been near him in all his recent humiliations and trials, who has shared them both to her very utmost, and thus obtained his confidence,—who but his patient and untiring nurse can mark and understand the struggle of his feelings, and lead them forth by partial anticipations, so gently that he is neither pained nor humbled by the whole confession.

Perchance it is at the hour of midnight, when fever gives him strength, and darkness hides his countenance, and he hears the sweet tones of that encouraging voice now modulated to the expression of a sympathy the most intense, and a love that many waters could not quench. There is no surprise in her rejoinder, when at last his lips have

spoken what he could not utter by the light of day, but a few simple words, more like those of recognition of what she had known before, and of what it is the lot of many to experience; and then, if ever, is the golden moment when the power to speak without wounding, and yet to speak home, is indeed an inestimable gift.

It is true that suitable and salutary words might be written out for some such occasion; but so differently constituted are human minds, that the same words would scarcely *prove* suitable and salutary to any two individuals, out of the countless myriads who throng the peopled earth.

Nor is the chamber of sickness the only situation in which the power of conversing easily and appropriately is of inestimable value. There are other cases of trial, of suffering, and of anxious solicitude, in which the mind would prey upon itself, even to the injury of the bodily frame, if not diverted from its object, and beguiled by pleasant conversation.

In seasons of protracted endurance, when some anticipated crisis, of immeasurable good or evil, comes not at the expected time, and every fresh disappointment only adds to the feverish restlessness which no human constitution is strong enough to sustain unharmed; what amusement could be devised for such a time, at all comparable to interesting and judicious conversation, gently touching upon the exciting theme, and then leading off by some of those innumerable channels which woman's ingenuity is so quick to discover, and so apt to make use of for purposes of generosity and kindness?

There are fireside scenes, too, of frequent and familiar occurrence, in which this feminine faculty may be rendered more serviceable than all other accomplishments—scenes that derive no sadness from acute or lively suffering, but are yet characterized by an inexpressible kind of melancholy, arising from the moodiness of man, or the perverseness of woman, or, perhaps, from a combination of domestic disagreeables attaching to every member of the family, and forming over their

better feelings a sort of incrustation, that must be dissolved or broken through before any thing like cheerfulness can shine forth.

There is, perhaps, more real sadness arising from causes like this, than from the more definite misfortunes with which we are visited; and not sadness only, but a kind of resentment bordering on secret malignity, as if each member of the family had poisoned the happiness of the others; and looks are directed askance, books are opened, and their leaves are methodically folded over; and yet the long dull evening will not wear away.

How like a ministering angel then is the woman, who, looking off from her work, directs her conversation to that member of the family who appears most accessible, and having gained his attention, gives the subject such a turn as to draw the attention of another, and perhaps a third, until all at last, without being aware of it, have joined in conversing on the same topic, and the close of the evening finds them mutually agreeable to each other. On such occasions, it is by no means an insignificant attainment to be able to awaken a laugh; for if two or three can be brought to laugh together, the incrustation is effectually broken, and they will be good friends without further effort.

I know it would be fruitless to lay down any minute and specific rules for conversation, because none could be acted upon *safely* without strict reference to the object upon which they might be brought to bear. Yet it may be said to be a rule almost without exception, that all persons are pleased to be talked about themselves, their own affairs, and their own connections, provided only it is done with *judgment, delicacy* and *tact*. When all other topics have been tried without effect, this will seldom be found to fail. Not, certainly, pursued upon what is described as the American plan, of decided inquisitiveness, but by remote allusions, and frequent recurrence to what has already been drawn forth, making it the foundation for greater confidence, and more definite communication.

That species of universal politeness, which

prompts inquiry after the relations of the stranger or the guest, appears to be founded upon this principle, occurring, as it so frequently does, where there can be no possible interest on the part of the inquirer.

It is not, however, for the purpose of pretending to that which does not really exist, that conversation can be recommended as an art, but simply for facilitating the expression of feelings which could not be so well explained by a more direct assurance of their nature and existence.

When a stranger from a distance—perhaps an orphan, or one who is compelled by adverse circumstances to seek the means of pecuniary support—comes to take up her abode in a family, no member of which she has ever seen before, by what means can the mother or the mistress of it make her feel that she is at home? She may tell her in plain words that she is disposed to make her comfortable, but it will touch with infinitely more force the heart of the stranger, if, with a countenance of kindly interest, she makes frequent and delicate mention of her friends, of her brothers or sisters, or other near relations, or even of the part of the world in which she has been accustomed to reside. This kind of mention, frequently bestowed with gentleness, and evident regard to the facts it elicits or the confidence it draws forth, will be much more effectual in gaining the desired end, than the warmest expressions of affectionate solicitude for the stranger herself.

I know that conversation, simply studied as an art, without right motives for its exercise, will be found of little benefit, either to society, or to the individuals who practise it. All I would maintain is, that it may be made the *medium* of conferring happiness—the instrument of doing good—and that to a greater extent than any other accomplishment in which woman can excel. For want of facility in speaking appropriately, how much good feeling is lost to the world, buried in the bosom where it originates, and where it becomes a burden and a load, from the very consciousness of inability to make it understood and felt!

How often do we hear the bitterest lamentations to this effect—"If I could but have told her what I felt—if I could but have addressed her appropriately at the time—if I had but known how to make the conversation lead to the point; but now the time has passed, and I may never have so suitable an opportunity again."

Besides the cases already described, there are some darker passages in human life, when women are thrown upon the actual *charm* of their conversation, for rendering more alluring the home that is not valued as it should be. Perhaps a husband has learned before his marriage the fatal habit of seeking recreation in scenes of excitement and convivial mirth. It is but natural that such habits should with difficulty be broken off, and that he should look with something like weariness upon the quiet and monotony of his own fireside. Music cannot always please, and books to such a man are a tasteless substitute for the evening party. He may possibly admire his wife, consider her extremely good-looking, and, for a woman, think her very pleasant; but the sobriety of matrimony pals upon his vitiated taste, and he longs to feel himself a free man again among his old associates.

Nothing would disgust this man so much, or drive him away so effectually, as any assumption on the part of his wife, of a *right* to detain him. The next most injudicious thing she could do, would be to exhibit symptoms of grief—of real sorrow and distress at his leaving her; for whatever may be said in novels on the subject of beauty in tears, seems to be rendered null and void by the circumstance of marriage having taken place between the parties.

The rational woman, whose conversation on this occasion is to serve her purpose more effectually than tears, knows better than to speak of what her husband would probably consider a most unreasonable subject of complaint. She tries to recollect some incident, some trait of character, or some anecdote of what has lately occurred within her knowledge, and relates it in her most lively and

piquant manner. If conscious of beauty, she tries a little raillery, and plays gently upon some of her husband's not unpleasing peculiarities, looking all the while as disengaged and unsuspecting as she can. If his attention becomes fixed, she gives her conversation a more serious turn, and plunges at once into some theme of deep and absorbing interest. If her companion grows restless, she changes the subject, and again recollects something laughable to relate to him. Yet all the while her own poor heart is aching with the feverish anxiety that vacillates between the extremes of hope and fear. She gains courage, however, as time steals on, for her husband is by her side; and with her increasing courage her spirits become exhilarated, and she is indeed the happy woman she has hitherto but appeared—for at last her husband looks at his watch, is astonished to find it is too late to join his friends, and, while the evening closes in, he wonders whether any other man has a wife so delightful and entertaining as his own.

Again, there is a class of beings, unfortunately for themselves, not always welcomed into good society, and yet severely blamed for seeking bad—a nondescript species of humanity, not properly called boys nor worthily called men, who are, above all other creatures, the most difficult to converse with. They seem, in fact, to be discarded from society; for old women are afraid of them, while young ones pronounce them bores,—and old men seem uniformly inclined to put them down, while young ones do little to raise them up. Yet in these very individuals, during this season of incipient manhood, the character of the future statesman or citizen, father or friend, is undergoing the process of formation; and all the while, the step that owes half its fleetness to the hope of leaving care and sorrow in the distance, bounds on with triumphant recklessness, because there is no friendly voice to arrest its progress or direct its course.

Who takes the trouble to converse with a youth of this description, for we confess it is a trouble, except where personal affection

prompts the act? Is there not one who will kindly endeavor to make the young heart confess itself,—for a heart there must be under all this rude and turbulent exterior? Yes, there is one. The reckless boy, after receiving a thousand insults—after having been elbowed off by one, pushed away by a second, and made game of by a third, comes home to his mother, and finds that his own fireside is indeed the happiest place on earth to him. His mother does what no one else will condescend to do: she converses with him—she treats him like a rational being. Interested in his amusements because they are his, she talks to him about his sports, his companions, and all the minutiae that fill up his daily life, anticipating all the while such feelings and sentiments as she believes him to possess, or at least gives him credit for, and thus leads him to confess; while the boy, feeling within himself the dawning of a brighter epoch in his existence, the stirring up of half-formed thoughts about to be matured, is happy and grateful to be thus encouraged to speak freely, and to be his better self.

Of evenings spent in this manner, who shall estimate the value, remembered as they often are in after life, and blended as they safely may be with that portion of self-respect which is always found to support the persevering, the upright, and the truly great?

The cases already mentioned, serve but as specimens of the mass of evidence that might be brought forward in favor of the utility of conversation judiciously carried on: what, then, must be said of the responsibility of those who possess this talent in its highest perfection, and either neglect to use it for any laudable purpose, or devote it to a bad one?

It seems to be too much the opinion of people in general, that agreeable conversation, like many other agreeable things, is only to be used for the benefit of guests and strangers. The truly English, domestic, and fireside companion has a higher estimate of this talent. She knows little of what is called the world, and would be too diffident to attempt to make a figure in it if she did. Her

world is her home ; and here, on days of laborious duty, as well as on days of pleasure,—when the family circle are met around their homely hearth, as well as when the distinguished guest is with them—it is her chief delight to beguile what might otherwise be to them heavy hours, with cheerful conversation. It is to her parents, her husband, her brothers, and her sisters, as well as to her intimate friends, that she is the entertaining and instructive companion, adapting herself to their different moods and temperaments, leading forth their thoughts beyond themselves, and raising them above the sordid and vexatious cares of every-day existence, until her voice becomes the music of her home, and her presence the charm that unites the different members of her household in a sacred bond of fellowship and peace.

The power of conversing well, presents a great temptation to a vain woman to use it for the gratification of her self-complacency. As there are few of the minor circumstances of life more mortifying than to find, that when you speak, no one listens to the end of your story or remark ; so there is no kind of flattery more irresistible than to find that your conversation gathers hearers, more and more ; and women are but too quick to detect the interest they excite depicted upon every face.

There is, however, a wide difference between the moral state of the woman who converses well in company, solely for the sake of obtaining admiration, and of her who converses well for the sake of making the time pass pleasantly or profitably to others. The former will be sure to be found among the gentlemen, especially if she be pleasing in her appearance, and she will have wholly overlooked the neglected or insignificant individuals of her own sex, who may happen to have been present. The other will have sought out the silent stranger—the poor relation—the plain woman—and all the most insignificant or unnoticed persons in the party. Especially she will have devoted herself to her own sex, and afforded to the company that rare, but noble illustration of female be-

nevolence—a fascinating woman in company *choosing* to make herself agreeable to women.

If any action arising from vanity could be either commendable or great, I am disposed to think it would be so, for a woman to show that she could afford to tear herself away from the attentions of men, and devote her powers of pleasing to her own sex. The woman we have described, however, has feelings of a higher order. Her object is to use every gift she possesses for the happiness or the benefit of her fellow-creatures, and her benevolence prompts her to seek out those who are most in need of kindness and consideration. Forgetful of herself, she regards her ability to please as one of the talents committed to her trust, for the employment of which she must render an account at that awful tribunal where no selfish plea will be admitted. And thus she cultivates the art of conversation for the sake of increasing her usefulness, of consoling the distressed, of instructing the ignorant, and of beguiling of half their heaviness the necessary cares of life.

CHAPTER VII.

DOMESTIC HABITS,—CONSIDERATION AND KINDNESS.

On entering upon the subject of the domestic habits of the women of England, I feel the necessity of bearing in mind that all individuals in the middle class of society, and even all who are connected with trade, are by no means under the same obligations to regard their own personal exertions as a duty. So far from this, there are unquestionably many in this class who would be entirely out of their province, were they to engage in the manual occupations of their families and households. The possession of wealth has placed them, in these respects, on the same footing with the nobility, and they have, without doubt, an equal right to enjoy the luxuries which wealth can procure. I

am, however, no less convinced that the absence of all necessity for personal exertion is a disadvantage to them, and that their happiness would be increased, if their situations in life were such as to present more imperative claims upon their individual services.

The virtue of considerateness refers strictly to the characters and circumstances of those around us. From the mistress of half a dozen servants, therefore, the same *kind* of consideration can never be required, as from the mistress of one: nor can the lady of a mansion, even though her husband should be engaged in trade, feel herself called to the same duties as the farmer's wife.

The considerateness I shall attempt to define is one of the highest recommendations the female character can possess; because it combines an habitual examination of our own situation and responsibilities, with a quick discernment of the character and feelings of those around us, and a benevolent desire to afford them as much pleasure, and spare them as much pain, as we can. A considerate woman therefore, whether surrounded by all appliances and means of personal enjoyment, or depending upon the use of her own hands for the daily comforts of life, will look around her, and consider what is due to those whom Providence has placed within the sphere of her influence.

The man who voluntarily undertakes a difficult and responsible business, first inquires *how* it is to be conducted so as best to ensure success: so the serious and thoughtful woman, on entering upon the duties of domestic life, ascertains, by reflection and observation, in what manner they may be performed so as to render them most conducive to the great end she has in view, the promotion of the happiness of others; and as the man engaged in business does not run hither and thither, simply to make a show of alacrity, neither does the woman engaged in a higher and more important work, allow herself to be satisfied with her own willingness to do her duty without a diligent and persevering investigation of what are the most effectual means by which it can be done.

Women are almost universally admonished of their duties in *general* terms, and hence they labor under great disadvantages. They are told to be virtuous; and in order to be so, they are advised to be kind and modest, orderly and discreet. But few teachers, and fewer writers, condescend to take up the minutiae of every-day existence, so far as to explain in what distinct and individual actions such kindness, modesty, order, and discretion consist. Indeed, the cases themselves upon which these principles of right conduct are generally brought to bear, are so minute, and so apparently insignificant, that the writer who takes up this subject must not only be content to sacrifice all the dignity of authorship, but must submit occasionally to a smile of contempt for having filled a book with trifles.

In order, however, to ascertain the real importance of any point of merit, we should take into consideration its direct opposite. We never know the value of true kindness, so much as when contrasted with unkindness; and lest any one should think lightly of the virtue of consideration as a moral faculty, let us turn our attention to the character and habits of a woman who is without it. Such are not difficult to find, and we find them often in the lovely, and the seemingly amiable creatures of impulse, who rush about, with the impetus of the moment operating as their plea, uncontrollable affection their excuse, and selfishness, unknown to them, the moving spring at the bottom of their hearts. These individuals believe themselves to be so entirely governed by amiable feelings, that they not unfrequently boast of being kind—nay, too, kind-hearted: but upon whom does their kindness tell, except upon themselves? It is true, they feel the impulse to be kind, and this impulse they gratify by allowing it to operate in any way that circumstances, or their own caprice, may point out. Yet, after all, how often is their kindness, for want of consideration, rendered wholly unavailable towards the promotion of any laudable or useful purpose!

Nor is this all. Want of consideration is

often the occasion of absolute pain : and those who, because they deem it a recommendation to act from the impulse of the moment, will not take the trouble to reflect, are always, in a greater or less degree, liable to inflict misery upon others.

I remember walking home on a beautiful summer's evening, with one of these lovely and impetuous creatures, who was then just entering upon all the rights and privileges of a belle, and, to my great surprise, observing that she trod indiscriminately upon all the creeping things which the damp and the dew had tempted forth in our path, I remonstrated with her, of course ; but she turned to me with her bewitching air of naiveté, and said—“And pray, why may I *not* tread upon the snails ?”—Further remonstrance was unnecessary, for the mind which had attained maturity without feeling enough to prevent this reckless and disgusting waste of life, must of necessity have been impervious to reason.

And thus it is with considerateness in general. If the season of youth glides over before habits of consideration are acquired, they will come tardily, and with little grace, in after life. Want of consideration for those of our fellow-creatures whose love is of importance to us, is not, however, a subject upon which we have so much cause for complaint. It is towards those to whom we are connected by social ties, without affection—and under this head, the situation of our servants and domestics claims the greatest care.

Servants are generally looked upon, by thoughtless young ladies, as a sort of household machinery, and when that machinery is of sufficient extent to operate upon every branch of the establishment, there can be no reason why it should not be brought into exercise, and kept in motion to any extent that may not be injurious. This machinery, however, is composed of individuals possessing hearts as susceptible of certain kinds of feeling, as those of the more privileged beings to whose comfort and convenience it is their daily business to minister. They know and feel that their lot in this world is comparatively hard : and if they are happily free from

all presumptuous questionings of the wisdom and justice of Providence in placing them where they are, they are alive to the conviction that the burden of each day is sufficient, and often more than sufficient for their strength.

In speaking of the obligation we are under to our domestics for their faithful services, it is no uncommon thing to be answered by this unmeaning remark ; “They are well paid for what they do :” as if the bare fact of receiving food and clothing for their daily labor, placed them on the same footing with regard to comfort, as those who receive their food and clothing for doing nothing.

There is also another point of view in which this class of our fellow-creatures is very unfairly judged. Servants are required to have no faults. It is by no means uncommon to find the mistress of a family, who has enjoyed all the advantages of moral and even religious education, allowing herself to exhibit the most unqualified excess of indignation at the petty faults of a servant, who has never enjoyed either ; and to hear her speak as if she was injured, imposed upon, insulted before her family, because the servant, who was engaged to work for her, had been betrayed into impertinence by a system of reproof as much at variance with Christian meekness, as the retort it was so well calculated to provoke.

Women of such habits, would perhaps be a little surprised, if told, that when a lady descends from her own proper station, to speak in an irritating or injurious manner to a servant, she is herself guilty of impertinence, and that no domestic of honest and upright spirit will feel that such treatment ought to be submitted to.

On the other hand, there is a degree of kindness blended with dignity, which servants, who are not absolutely depraved, are able to appreciate ; and the slight effort required to obtain their confidence, is almost invariably repaid by a double share of affectionate and faithful service.

The situation of living unloved by their domestics is one which I should hope there are

few women capable of enduring with indifference. The cold attentions rendered without affection, and curtailed by every allowable means, the short unqualified reply to every question, the averted look, the privilege stolen rather than solicited, the secret murmur that is able to make itself understood without the use of words—all these are parts of a system of behavior that chills the very soul, and forces upon the mind the unwelcome conviction, that a stranger who partakes not in our common lot, is within our domestic circle; or that an alien who enters not into the sphere of our home associations, attends upon our social board; nay, so forcible is the impression, as almost to extend to a feeling that an enemy is among the members of our own household.

How different is the impression produced by a manner calculated both to win their confidence and inspire their respect! The kind welcome after absence, the watchful eye, the anticipation of every wish, the thousand little attentions and acts of service beyond what are noted in the bond—who can resist the influence of these upon the heart, and not desire to pay them back—not certainly in their own kind and measure, but in the only way they can be returned consistently with the relative duties of both parties—in kindness and consideration?

It is not, however, in seasons of health and prosperity, that this bond between the different members of a family can be felt in its full force. There is no woman so happily circumstanced, but that she finds some link broken in the charm which binds her to this world—some shadow cast upon her earthly pictures. The best beloved are not always those who love the best; and expectation will exceed reality, even in the most favored lot. There are hours of sadness that will steal in, even upon the sunny prime of life; and they are not felt the less, because it is sometimes impossible to communicate the reason for such sadness to those who are themselves the cause. In such cases, and while the heart is in some degree estranged from natural and familiar fellowship, we are thrown

more especially upon the kindness and affection of our domestics for the consolation we feel it impossible to live without. They may be, and they ought to be, wholly unacquainted with the cause of our disquietude; but a faithfully attached servant, without presuming beyond her proper sphere, is quick to discern the tearful eye, the gloomy brow, the countenance depressed; and it is at such times that their kindness, solicitude, and delicate attentions, might often put to shame the higher pretensions of superior refinement.

In cases of illness or death, it is perhaps more especially their merit to prove, by their indefatigable and unrequited assiduities, how much they make the interest of the family their own, and how great is their anxiety to remove all lighter causes of annoyance from interference with the greater affliction in which those around them are involved. There is scarcely a more pitiable object in creation than a helpless invalid left entirely to the care of domestics whose affection never has been sought or won. But, on the other hand, the readiness with which they will sometimes sacrifice their needful rest, and that, night after night, to watch the feverish slumbers of a fretful invalid, is one of those redeeming features in the aspect of human nature which it is impossible to regard without feelings of admiration and gratitude.

The question necessarily follows,—how are our domestics to be won over to this confidence and affection? It comes not by nature, for no tie, except what necessarily implies authority and subjection, exists between us. It cannot come by mutual acts of service, because the relation between us is of such a nature as to place the services almost entirely on their side, the benefits derived from such services, on ours. It comes, then, by instances of consideration, showing that we have their interests at heart in the same degree that we expect them to have ours. We cannot actually *do* much for them, because it would be out of our province, and a means of removing them out of theirs; but we can think and feel for them, and thus lighten or add weight to their burdens, by the manner

in which our most trifling and familiar actions are performed.

In a foregoing chapter, I have ventured a few hints on the subject of manners, chiefly as regards their influence among those who meet us upon equal terms in the social affairs of life. The influence of the manner we choose to adopt in our intercourse with servants, is of such importance as to deserve further notice than the nature of this work will allow.

There is a phenomenon sometimes witnessed at the head of a well-appointed table, from which many besides myself have no doubt started with astonishment and disgust. A well-dressed, well-educated lady, attired in the most becoming and fashionable costume, is engaged in conversing with her friends, pressing them to partake of her well-flavored viands, and looking and speaking with the blandest smiles; when suddenly one of the servants is beckoned towards her, and with an instantaneous expression of countenance, in which is concealed the passion and the imperiousness of a whole lifetime, he is admonished of his duty in sharp whispers that seem to hiss like lightning in his ears. The lady then turns round to her guests, is again arrayed in smiles, and prepared again to talk sweetly of the sympathies and amiabilities of our common nature.

There is, it must be confessed, a most objectionable manner which blends *familiarity* with confidence; and this ought to be guarded against as much in reproof as in commendation; for it cannot be expected that a mistress who reproves her servant with coarseness and vulgarity, will be treated with much delicacy in return. The consideration I would recommend, so far from inviting familiarity, is necessarily connected with true dignity, because it implies in the most undeviating manner, a strict regard to the relative position of both parties. Let us see then in what it consists, or rather let us place it in a stronger light by pointing out instances in which the absence of it is most generally felt.

There are many young ladies, and some old ones, with whom the patronage of pets appears

to be an essential part of happiness; and these pets, as various as the tastes they gratify, are all alike in one particular—they are all troublesome. If a lady engages her servants with an understanding that they are to wait upon her domestic animals, no one can accuse her of injustice. But if, with barely a sufficient number of domestics to perform the necessary labor of her household, she establishes a menagerie, and expects the hard-working servants to undertake the additional duty of waiting upon her pets—perhaps the most repulsive creatures in existence to them—such additional service ought at least to be solicited as a favor; and she will have no right to feel indignant, should the favor be sometimes granted in a manner neither gracious nor conciliating.

When a servant who has been all day laboring hard to give an aspect of comfort and cleanliness to the particular department committed to her care, sees the young ladies of the family come home from their daily walk, and, never dreaming of her, or her hard labor, trample over the hall and stairs without stopping to rid themselves of that encumbrance of clay, which a fanciful writer has classed among the “miseries of human life,” is it to be expected that the servant who sees this should be so far uninfluenced by the passions of humanity, as not to feel the stirrings of rage and resentment in her bosom? And when this particular act is repeated every day, and followed up by others of the same description, the frequently recurring sensations of rage and resentment, so naturally excited, will strengthen into those of habitual dislike, and produce that cold service and grudging kindness which has already been described.

There are thousands of little acts of this description, such as ordering the tired servants at an unseasonable hour to prepare an early breakfast, and then not being ready yourself before the usual time—being habitually too late for dinner, without any sufficient reason, and having a second dinner served up—ringing the bell for the servant to leave her washing, cooking, or cleaning, and come up to you to receive orders to fetch your thimble or scissors,

from the highest apartment in the house—all which need no comment; and surely those servants must be more than human who can experience the effects of such a system of behavior, carried on for days, months, and years, and not feel, and feel bitterly, that they are themselves regarded as mere machines, while their comfort and convenience is as much left out of calculation, as if they were nothing more.

It is an easy thing, on entering a family, to ascertain whether the female members of it are, or are not, considerate. Where they are not, there exists, as a necessary consequence, a constant series of murmurings, pleadings, remonstrances, and attempted justifications, which sadly mar the happiness of the household. On the other hand, where the female members of the family are considerate, there is a secret spring of sympathy linking all hearts together, as if they were moved by a simultaneous impulse of kindness on one side, and gratitude on the other. Few words have need to be spoken, few professions to be made, for each is hourly discovering that they have been the subject of affectionate solicitude, and they are consequently on the watch for every opportunity to make an adequate return. If the brother comes home sad or weary, the sister to whom he has pledged himself to some exertion, detects the languor of his eye, and refrains from pressing upon him a fulfilment of his promise; if the sister is laboring under depression, the brother feels himself especially called upon to stand forward as her friend; and if one of the family be suffering even slightly from indisposition, there are watchful eyes around, and the excursion is cheerfully given up by one, the party by another, and a quiet social evening is unanimously agreed upon to be spent at home, and agreed upon in such a way as that the invalid shall never suspect it has been done at the cost of any pleasure.

There is no proof of affection more kindly prompted and more gratefully received, than that of easily detecting uncomplained-of indisposition. We might almost single out this faculty as the surest test of love—for who

observes the incipient wrinkle on a stranger's brow, or marks the gradually increasing paleness of an unloved cheek? Or what can convince us more effectually that we are in a world of strangers, to whom our interests are as nothing, than to be pressed on every hand to do what our bodily strength is unequal to.

There are points of consideration in which we often practice great self-deception. "Don't you think it would do you good, my dear?" asks the young lady of her sickly sister, when the day of promised pleasure is at hand, and she begins to fear her sister's cough will render it impossible to go from home. "The pain in your foot, my love, is considerably better," says the wife to her husband, when she thinks the fashionables are about leaving Bath. "You are looking extremely well," says the niece to her aged uncle, who has promised to take her to Paris; "I think I never saw you look so well." But all this is not love. It does not feel like love to the parties addressed; for nature is true to herself, and she will betray the secrets of art. How different are the workings of that deep and earnest affection that sees with one glance how unreasonable it would be to drag forth the invalid to any participation in the enjoyments of health; and how welcome is the gentle whisper which assures us that one watchful eye perceives our suffering, one sympathizing ear participates in our weakness and distress; for it is distress to be compelled to complain that we are unequal to do what the happiness of others depends upon our doing; and never is the voice of friendship employed in a more kindly office, than when pleading the cause of our infirmity.

It is chiefly with regard to the two sister virtues of consideration and kindness, that I look upon the women of England as so highly privileged; because the nature of their social and domestic circumstances is such, as to afford them constantly-recurring opportunities of proving that they think often and kindly of others, without any departure from the wonted routine of their conduct, that

might wear the character of a pointed application of such feelings.

It has a startling, and by no means an agreeable effect upon the mind, when a woman who is not habitually accustomed to any sort of practical kindness, so far deviates from her usual line of conduct, as to perform any personal service solely for ourselves. We feel that she has been troubled, and suspect that she has been annoyed. But women accustomed to practical duties are able to turn the whole tide of their affectionate solicitude into channels so wholesome and salutary, that our pride is not wounded by the obligation under which we are placed, nor is our sense of gratitude impaired by the pain of being singled out as the object of unwonted and elaborate attentions.

In order to illustrate the subject by a familiar instance, let us imagine one of those events experienced by all who have lived to years of maturity, and experienced in such a way as to have thrown them in a peculiar manner upon the domestic comforts of the circle to which they were introduced—the arrival, after long travel, on a visit to an early and highly valued friend.

It is not necessary to this picture, that park gates should be thrown open, and footmen stationed on the steps of the hall; it will better serve our purpose, that the mistress of the house should herself be the first to meet her guest, with that genuine welcome in her looks and manner that leaves nothing to be expressed by words. We will suppose that with her own hand she displaces all the encumbrance of extra wrappings, rendered necessary by the winter's journey, and having quietly dismissed the expectant chaise-driver or porter, she leads her friend into the neatly furnished parlor, where another and a more familiar welcome seems at once to throw open her heart and her house for her reception. A fire that has been designedly built up, is then most energetically stirred, until a bright and genial blaze diffuses its light around the room, and the guest begins to glow with the two-fold warmth of a welcome and a winter's fire.

In the mean time, the servant, well taught in the mysteries of hospitality, conveys the luggage up stairs unseen, and the guest is led to the chamber appointed for her nightly rest. There, most especially, is both seen and felt the kind feeling that has taken into account her peculiar tastes, and anticipated all her well-remembered wishes. The east or the west apartment has been chosen, according to the preference she has been known to express in days long since gone by, when she and her friend were girls together; and thus the chain of fond and cherished recollections is made to appear again unbroken after the lapse of years, and a conviction is silently impressed upon the mind of the traveller—perhaps the most welcome of all earthly sources of assurances—that we have been remembered, not merely in the abstract—but that through long, long years of change and separation, time has not obliterated from the mind of a dear friend, the slightest trace of our individuality.

Perhaps none can tell until they have arrived at middle age, what is in reality the essential sweetness of this conviction. In our association with the world, we may have obtained for our industry, our usefulness, or it may be for our talents, a measure of approval at least commensurate with our deserts; but give back to the worn and the weary in this world's warfare, the friends of their early youth—the friends who loved them, faults and all—the friends who could note down their very follies without contempt, and who attached a degree of interest and importance to the trifling peculiarities of their temper and feelings, which rendered them indelible memorials of an attachment, such as never can be formed in after life.

To return from this digression. The English woman, in the unsophisticated beauty of her character, has a power far surpassing what can be attained by the most scrupulous observance of the rules of art, of thus investing her familiar and social actions with a charm that goes directly to the heart.

We have traced the traveller to the chamber of her rest, and it is not in the choice of

this room alone, but in its furniture and general aspect, that she reads the cheering truth of a superintending care having been exercised over all it contains, in strict reference to herself, not merely as an honored guest, but as a lover of this or that small article of comfort or convenience, which in the world of comparative strangers among whom she has been living, she has seldom thought it worth her while to stipulate for, and still less frequently has had referred to her choice.

Now, it is evident that the mistress of the house herself must have been here. With her own hand she must have placed upon the table the favorite toilet-cushion, worked by a friend who was alike dear to herself and her guest. With her own hand she must have selected the snow-white linen, and laid out, not in conspicuous obtrusiveness, a few volumes calculated for the hours of silent meditation, when her friend shall be alone.

It is impossible that the services of the most faithful domestic should be able to convey half the heartfelt meaning indicated by these few familiar acts, so richly worth their cost. It is not from the circumstance of having all our wants supplied, that the most lively satisfaction is derived; it is from the cheering fact that we ourselves, in our individual capacity, have been the object of so much faithful recollection and untiring love.

Instead therefore of regarding it as a subject for murmuring and complaint, that her means of personal indulgence do not supply her with a greater number of domestics, the true English woman ought rather to esteem it a privilege that her station in life is such as to place her in the way of imparting this rational and refined enjoyment.

We cannot imagine the first day of hospitable welcome complete without our visitor being introduced to that concatenation of comforts—an early tea. On descending from her chamber, then, she finds all things in readiness for this grateful and refreshing meal. Her attention is not distracted by apologies for what is not there, but what, on such occasions, frequently might have been, at the cost of half the effort required for an

elaborate excuse. As if the fairy order had been at work, the table is spread with all things most agreeable after weary travel; and the guest, instead of being pressed to eat with such assiduity that she begins to think her visit has no other object, is only interrupted by kind inquiries relating to home associations, and is beguiled into a prolongation of her meal, by being drawn out into a detail of the events of her journey.

As the evening passes on, their conversation becomes more intimate, and while it deepens in interest, that full expansion of the soul takes place, under which, whatever English women may be in the superficial intercourse of polished life, I have no scruple in saying, that as fireside companions, they are the most delightful upon earth. There are such vivid imaginings, and such touches of native humor, such deep well-springs of feeling, beyond their placid exterior; that when they *dare* to come forth, and throw themselves upon the charity or affection of their hearers, one is beguiled into a fascination the more intense, because it combines originality of thought with gentle manners, and in a peculiar and forcible way invests the cherished recollections of the past, with the fresh warm coloring of the present hour.

It is not amidst congregated masses of society, that the true English woman can exhibit her native powers of conversation. It is when two are met together, with perhaps a husband or a brother for a third, and the midnight hour steals on, and yet they take no note of time, for they are opening out their separate store of treasures from the deep of memory, sharing them with each other, and blending all with such bright anticipations of the future, as none but a woman's imagination can enjoy, with faith in their reality.

Or, perhaps, they are consulting upon some difficult point of duty, or sympathizing with each other in affliction; and then, where shall we look but to the English woman for the patient listener, the faithful counsellor, the stanch supporter of each virtuous purpose, the keen discernor in points of doubtful

merit, and the untiring comforter in every hour of need.

It would be too tedious, and might to some appear too trifling, were I to trace out the conduct of the being here described, through more of the familiar scenes presented by domestic life. It may also be thought by some who know little of women in this capacity, that I am drawing merely from imagination; others will know that my coloring is true—that human life, in some of its obscurest passages, has secrets of moral excellence in the female character, presenting objects as lovely as ever were revealed to the poet's fancy. Alas! for those whose memory alone supplies them with the materials for this picture—who now can only feel that "such things were."

The charge of trifling is one I should be sorry to incur in writing on a subject so serious as the domestic morals of women; yet how to enter into a detail sufficiently minute without, I confess I do not clearly see. I must, therefore, again pause, and ask the reader, in my own defence, of what the ordinary life of a woman of the middle class of society is composed, but a mass of trifles, out of which arises the happiness or the misery of a numerous and important portion of the human race? I would also ask, What is a woman who despises trifles? She may possibly enjoy, with undisputed dignity, a niche in the temple of fame, but she ought never to descend from her marble pedestal, to mingle with the social circle around the living blaze of the domestic hearth. Those quiet, unobtrusive virtues, which are ever the most lovely in the female character, must necessarily be the most difficult to define. They are so much more felt than seen—so much better understood than described—that to give them a name would be impossible, and even to portray them in an ideal picture might not perhaps convey to the mind of the beholder any adequate idea of their importance. But, as in painting a finished picture, the skill of the artist is not only required in the general outline, but is equally requisite in the *filling-up*, so the perfection of the female character

is not sufficiently indicated by saying she is possessed of every virtue, unless we point out the individual instances upon which those virtues are brought to bear; and the more minute and delicate their aspect, if they are but frequently presented to our notice, the stronger is our conviction that virtuous principle is the ground-work of the whole.

With regard to the particular instance already described, the case may perhaps be more clearly illustrated by adding a picture of an opposite description, in order to ascertain in what particular points the two cases differ.

For this purpose, we will imagine a woman distinguished by no extreme of character, receiving her guest under precisely the same circumstances as the one already described. In this case, the visitor is permitted to see that her hostess has reluctantly laid down her book at the latest possible period of time which politeness would allow; or, after her guest has remained twenty minutes in a vacant, and by no means inviting parlor, she comes toiling up from the kitchen, with a countenance that makes it dreadful to be adding to her daily fatigues by placing one's self at her table; and she answers the usual inquiries of her friend, as to her state of health, with a minute detail of the various phenomena of a headache with which she has that morning been attacked. The *one domestic* is then called up—and wo betide that family, whose daily services, *unpractised by its individual members towards each other*, all emanate from *one domestic*.

The *one domestic* then is ordered, in the hearing of the guest, to take all the luggage up stairs, to bring hot water, towels, soap—to turn the carpets—run for the best looking-glass—and see that tea is ready by the time the friend comes down. The party then ascend, accompanied by the panting servant, into a room, upon which no kind of care has been bestowed. It may possibly be neat—so neat that the guest supposes it never has been, and is not yet intended to be, used. Yes, every thing is in its place; but a general blank pervades the whole, and it is not

the least of the disappointments experienced by our guest, that she finds no water to refresh her aching temples. The mistress of the house is angry at this neglect, and rings the bell. The servant ascends from the kitchen to the highest room, to learn that she must go down again, and return, before half the catalogue of her faults has been told.

On such errands as this, she is employed until the party descend to the parlor, where the bell is again rung more imperatively, and the tea is ordered to be brought instantler. In the mean time, the fire has dwindled to the lowest bar. The mistress looks for coals, but the usual receptacle is empty. She feels as if there were a conspiracy against her. There is—there *can* be no one to blame but the servant; and thus her chagrin is alleviated by complaints against servants in general, and her own in particular. With these complaints, and often-repeated apologies, the time is occupied until the appearance of the long-expected meal, when the guest is pressed to partake of a repast not sweetened by the comments of her hostess, or the harassed and forlorn appearance of an over-worked domestic.

The mistress of this house may all the while be glad to see her guest, and may really regard her as an intimate and valued friend; but never having made it an object to practise the domestic virtue of making others happy, she knows not how to convey any better idea of a welcome than by words. She, therefore, sets deliberately to work to describe how happy she esteems herself in receiving so dear a friend—wishes some third party were at home—hopes to be able to amuse her—tells of the parties she has engaged for each successive evening—brings out a pile of engravings—fears her guest is weary—and lastly, at a very early hour, rings for the chamber-candlesticks, presuming that her visitor would like to retire.

It is needless to observe that the generality of visitors do retire upon this hint; and it is equally needless to add, that the individual here described fails to exhibit the character of the *true English woman*, whose peculiar

charm is that of diffusing happiness, without appearing conspicuously as the agent in its diffusion. It is from the unseen, but active principle of disinterested love, ever working at her heart, that *she* enters, with a perception as delicate as might be supposed to belong to a ministering angel, into the peculiar feelings and tones of character influencing those around her, applying the magical key of sympathy to all they suffer or enjoy, to all they fear or hope, until she becomes identified as it were with their very being, blends her own existence with theirs, and makes her society essential to their highest earthly enjoyment.

If a heightened degree of earthly enjoyment were all we could expect to obtain, by this line of conduct, I should still be disposed to think the effect produced would be richly worth our pains. But I must again repeat, that the great aim of a Christian woman will always be, so to make others happy, that their feelings shall be attuned to the reception of better thoughts than those which relate to mere personal enjoyment—so to make others happy, as to win them over to a full perception of the loveliness of those Christian virtues, which her own life and conduct consistently show forth.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOMESTIC HABITS—CONSIDERATION AND KINDNESS.

THE subject of consideration might be continued to almost any extent, since it seems either to comprehend, or to be closely connected with, all that is morally excellent in woman. We shall, however, confine our attention to only a few more of those important branches in which this fertile theme demands our serious thought—towards those who are beneath us in pecuniary circumstances, and towards those with whom we are associated in the nearest domestic relations.

The young and inexperienced having never

themselves tasted the cup of adversity, are, in a great measure, excusable for not knowing how to treat the morbid and susceptible feelings, which the fact of having drank deeply of that cup often produces; nor is it easy to communicate to their minds any idea of the extreme of suffering to which this tone of feeling may extend. Much may be done, however, by cultivating habits of consideration, by endeavoring sometimes to identify themselves with those who suffer, by asking how it would be with them if their parents had fallen below what, by the world, is called respectability—if they were obliged to seek the means of maintaining themselves—if they were admitted into families by sufferance, and only on condition that they should remain until another home could be found, in which their own hands might minister to their necessities.

There is no class of beings whose circumstances altogether are more calculated to call forth our tenderest sympathies, than those delicate females whose fireside comforts are broken up by the adverse turn of their pecuniary affairs, and who are consequently sent forth to share the lot of families unknown to them, and to throw themselves upon the kindness and consideration of strangers. It is in cases of this kind, especially, that we see the importance of having cultivated the moral faculties, of having instilled into the mind those sound principles of integrity, usefulness, and moral responsibility, which, in proportion as they become the foundation of our familiar and daily conduct, necessarily invest every act of duty with a cheerfulness which cannot fail to be acceptable in the sight of that merciful Creator, who alone is capable of transforming what is irksome or repulsive to the natural feelings, into sources of gratitude and delight.

The frequent occurrence of such changes in the pecuniary affairs of English families, as render it necessary for the female members to be thus circumstanced is, therefore, one among the many reasons, why the effects of that false refinement which is gradually increasing among the female part of English

society, should be counteracted by the strenuous efforts of the well-wishers of their country; and high time it is, that all our energies should be roused, not by any means to retard the progress of intellect, but to force along with it the growth of sound principles, and the increase of moral power.

Persons who are reduced in their pecuniary circumstances are generally judged of as we judge our servants, and those who are born to humble means; they are required to have no faults, and the public cry is especially directed against them, if they evince the least symptom of pride. Indeed, so great is our abhorrence of this particular fault, that we often make even a slight evidence of its existence a plea for the discontinuance of our bounty and our favor. We forget that the pride of the individuals in question has perhaps been ministered to throughout the whole of their former lives, and that they, no more than we, can renounce their soul-besetting sins, as they give up the luxuries they are no longer able to procure. We forget, also, that their circumstances are calculated, in an especial manner, to rouse the lurking evil, even had it never been conspicuous in their characters before.

The man who floats safely upon the stream of worldly prosperity, with his early companions a little lower than himself, can afford to be gracious and conciliating; but when he begins to sink, and feels the same companions struggling to float past him, and finally leaving him to contend with his difficulties, his feelings towards them undergo a total change: he accounts himself an injured man, and becomes a prey to envy, disappointment, and wounded pride. The world's contumely, more grievous than his actual privations, assails his peace of mind; he learns to look for unkindness, and to expect it, even where it does not exist. In the stranger's eye he reads contempt and neglect; he lives, as it were, surrounded by daggers—bleeding at every pore, and wounded by every thing with which he comes in contact. "How absurd!" is the exclamation we hear from the prosperous and incon-

siderate—"how worse than absurd for a man to be feeling in this manner, because he has lost a few hundreds!" And yet men do feel to such a degree, that nothing but religion can enable them to bear such vicissitudes with calmness and resignation. And even when supported by religion, it has pleased our heavenly Father to accompany these dispensations of his providence, with a degree of suffering to which no human mind is insensible.

It is generally regarded as the extreme of benevolence, if, in our intercourse with such persons, we treat them exactly as we did in more prosperous days; and few there are who can at all times withhold expressions equivalent to these: "How unreasonable it is to expect so much attention now! It is not likely we can ask that family to meet *our* friends; we should be willing still to notice them in a private way, if they would but be more grateful—more *considerate*." And thus they are allowed to pass away from our social gatherings, to be called upon perhaps occasionally at their own humble abodes, but by no means to be invited in return, lest some of our wealthier friends should detect us in the act of performing the offices of hospitality to a person in a threadbare coat. And yet this family may have done nothing worse than thousands are doing every day—than even our richest and dearest friends are doing—and we may know it all the while.

It sickens the heart to think of these things, and to reflect how far—how very far, even the good and the kind, fall short of that beautiful and heart-touching injunction of our blessed Saviour, "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind."

The wealthy and distinguished man, with whom we have but a slight acquaintance, sends his son into our neighborhood on business or pleasure. We hear of his coming, and persuade ourselves it is but respectful to invite him to be our guest. It is at the expense of our domestic comfort that we entertain him—but that is nothing. Diffi-

culties appear on every hand to vanish as soon as they appear; we even persuade ourselves that a sort of merit attaches to our doing all in our power to accommodate the son of so distinguished a person.

The poor widow, perhaps our relative, sends *her* son to town to seek a situation, and we hear of *his* coming. We knew his mother in more prosperous days. She was a worthy woman then, but her husband died insolvent, and the family necessarily fell away from what they had been. It cannot be at all incumbent upon us to ask such young men as these to our houses. They might come in shoals. Our domestic comfort would be sacrificed, and it is the duty of every one to maintain the peace and order of their own household.

Thus the widow's son is allowed to wander up and down the streets, to resort to expensive lodging-houses, and to purchase, with the pittance provided by his mother from her slender means, that accommodation which a little Christian hospitality might have spared him.

We complain that our streets are thronged on the Sabbath-day with troops of idle young men and women, who afford a painful spectacle to those who pass them on their way to public worship. How many of these—apprentices, and assistants in business—are actually driven into the streets from very want of any thing like a hospitable or social home!

I am by no means prepared to say, how far true Christian benevolence, acted out towards this class of the community, would lead us to give up our domestic comfort for their sakes, and for the sake of preserving them from harm; but I do know it would lead us to adopt a very different treatment of them, from that which generally prevails; and I consider also, that these duties rest especially with women.

It is not easy for a man who has to fill the office of master to a number of apprentices and assistants during the hours of business, to unbend before them at his own fireside. But a considerate and high-principled wo-

man, may, without loss of dignity, and certainly without loss of respect, make them feel that she regards it as her duty to be their friend as well as their mistress, and that she looks upon herself as under a sacred obligation to advise them in difficulties, to guard their welfare, and promote their comfort, simply because the all-wise Disposer of human affairs has seen meet to place them within the sphere of her influence.

I have devoted a chapter to the influence of English women. Many chapters might be filled with the duties of tradesmen's wives towards the young people employed in their husbands' affairs, and the responsibility attaching to them, for the tone of moral character which such persons exhibit through the whole of their after lives. Of how little value, in this point of view, is the immense variety of accomplishments generally acquired at school, compared with the discrimination and tact that would enable a woman to extend her influence among the class of persons here described, and the principle that would lead her to turn such influence to the best account! How many a mother's heart would be made glad by finding, when her son returned to his home, that he had experienced something of a mother's kindness from his master's wife; and how many a father would rejoice that his child had been preserved from the temptations of a city life, by the good feeling that was cherished and kept alive at his master's fireside!

It is for circumstances such as these, that a large proportion of the young women of England, now undergoing the process of education, have to prepare. Not to imitate the heroines they read of; but to plunge into the actual cares, and duties, and responsibilities of every-day existence. They will probably have little time either for drawing or music, may seldom be spoken to in a foreign tongue, and hardly have any opportunity of displaying half the amount of verbal knowledge with which their memories have been stored. But they will, if they are at all intent upon fulfilling the great end of their existence, have to bethink themselves every

hour, what is best to be done for the good and the happiness of those around them. For this great and laudable purpose, it is of the highest importance that they should cultivate habits of consideration; for how else can they expect to enter into the states of mind, and modes of feeling of those with whom they associate, so as to render the means they use effectual to the end desired?

It happens to almost all families, in the middle rank of life in England, that they are directly or remotely connected with relatives whose pecuniary means are much more limited than their own. To these, as well as to persons of recently decayed fortune, it is generally thought highly meritorious to extend the common courtesies of society. It implies no disrespect to this class of individuals, to call them poor relations; since the poor are often brought into a state of wholesome discipline, which eventually places them higher than the rich in the scale of moral worth. The poor relation may possibly have known in very early life what it was to enjoy all the comforts that ample means afford; but she becomes at last a sort of useful appendage to an uncle's or a brother's family, or is invited by her cousins whenever they happen to be in arrears with their plain-work—when one of the family wants nursing through a tedious illness—or when they are going abroad, and require some one to overlook the household in their absence.

The poor relation, in the first place, is shown up stairs into a kind of tolerable attic, where the walls are white-washed, and where a little bed with blue-check curtains is prepared for her accommodation. They hope she will not mind sleeping in the attic—indeed they are sure she will not, she is such a dear good creature; besides, they all like the attic for the view it commands, and mamma says it is the most comfortable room in the house: yet, somehow or other, the young ladies never sleep in the attic themselves; and considering it is the most desirable room in the house, and commands so excellent a view, it is astonishingly seldom occupied.

The poor relation is then introduced to

company without a name—is spoken of as the *person* staying at Mrs. So and So's; and, after being told that she need not sit longer than is agreeable to her after meals, is fairly installed into office by being informed, that the south chamber is very warm without a fire, and has a good light too, so that she can see an hour longer there than in any other. Here the different members of the family bring their work for her to do, looking round every time they enter, with a hope that she does not feel cold. From the young lady of twenty years, to the child of three, a demand is made upon her for the supply of all absent buttons, and all broken strings. All the stockings hoarded up against her coming are brought to her to be darned—all borders to quill—all linen to be mended: and this inundation of work is the natural consequence of her having shown symptoms of a desire to be generally agreeable; but if no such desire has been exhibited, wo betide the poor relation who proposes a visit to a rich one, where kindly feeling and habits of consideration have never been cultivated.

I remember it was very startling to me in my youth, and appeared to me at that time a contradiction in human nature, that, while people had comfortable homes, and were surrounded by every thing that could minister to enjoyment, they were often invited out to partake of the enjoyments of their friends, and so pressed to prolong such visits, that it seemed as if their friends could never be weary of their society. But, let the same individuals have no home, let them be placed in circumstances calculated to render an invitation peculiarly acceptable, and it was with difficulty obtained, or not obtained at all. Though in all respects as agreeable as in former days, they were not pressed to stay beyond a very limited period; and some who had been the most solicitous to enjoy the favor of their company, suddenly found their accommodations so exceedingly small, that they could not invite any guest to partake of their hospitality.

But these, my sisters, are disgraceful ways, for woman—warm-hearted, generous, noble-

minded woman, to fall into. From men we expect not all those little niceties of behavior and feeling that would tend to heal the wounds of adversity. Their necessary pursuits deprive them of many opportunities of making the unfortunate and afflicted feel, that amidst the wreck of their worldly hopes, they have at least retained some moral dignity in the estimation of their friends; but from woman we do look for some redeeming charities, some tenderness of heart among the sordid avocations and selfish pursuits of this life; and never do they rise to such true eminence, as when they bestow these charities, and apply this tenderness to the broken in spirit, the neglected, and the desolate, who are incapable of rendering them any return.

Harassed by the cares and perplexities of a sordid world, and disappointed in the high promise of our early youth; neglected, perhaps despised where we had hoped to find protection and support in the hour of trial; driven out from the temples of our soul's idolatry, it is to woman that we look for the mantle of charity, to cast over the blighted bosom—for the drop of sweetness to mingle with our bitter cup. We stretch our eyes over the wide tumultuous ocean of life, for some spot on which our ark may rest. We send forth the raven, and it returns not; but the gentler dove comes back with the olive-branch, and we hail it as a harbinger of safety and peace.

Although it must be confessed that women are sometimes too negligent of the tender offices of kindness towards those who have no immediate claim upon their affections, there remains some excuse for this particular species of culpability, in the general usages of society; and in the example of discreet and prudent persons, who deem it unsafe to deviate in any conspicuous manner from the beaten track of custom. No excuse, however, can be found for those who permit the closer ties of relationship to exist, without endeavoring to weave into the same bond, all the tender sympathies of which the human heart is capable.

Brothers and sisters are so associated in English homes, as materially to promote each

other's happiness, by the habits of kindness and consideration which they cultivate; and when a strong friendship can be formed between such parties, it is perhaps one of the most faithful and disinterested of any which the aspect of human life presents. A young man of kind and social feelings is often glad to find in his sister, a substitute for what he afterwards ensures more permanently in a wife; and young women are not backward in returning this affection by a love as confiding, and almost as tender as they are capable of feeling. Their intercourse has also the endearing charm of early association, which no later-formed acquaintance can supply. They have shared the sunny hours of childhood together; and when the young man goes forth into the world, the love of his sister is like a talisman about his heart. Woman, however, must be watchful and studious to establish this intimate connection, and to keep entire the golden cord by which they are thus bound. Affection does not come by relationship alone; and never yet was the affection of man fully and lastingly engaged by woman, without some means being adopted on her part to increase or preserve his happiness. The childish and most unsatisfactory fondness that means nothing but "I love you," goes but a little way to reach the heart of man; but let his home be made more comfortable, let his peculiarities of habit and temper be studiously consulted, and social and familiar gratifications provided for his daily use; and, unless he is ungrateful beyond the common average of mankind, he will be sure to regard the source from whence his comforts flow with extreme complacency, and not unfrequently with affection.

On the other hand, let the sister possess all that ardor of attachment which young ladies are apt to believe they feel, let her hang about his neck at parting, and bathe his face with her tears; if she has not taken the trouble to rise and prepare his early meal, but has allowed him to depend upon the servant, or to prepare it for himself; it is very questionable whether that brother could be made to believe in her affection; and cer-

tainly he would be far from feeling its value. If, again, they read some interesting volume together, if she lends her willing sympathy, and blends her feelings with his, entering into all the trains of thought and recollection which two congenial minds are capable of awakening in each other; and if, after the book is closed, he goes up into his chamber late on the Saturday night, and finds his linen unaired, buttonless, and unattended to, with the gloves he had ten times asked to have mended, remaining untouched, where he had left them; he soon loses the impression of the social hour he had been spending, and wishes, that, instead of an idle sister, he had a faithful and industrious wife. He reasons, and reasons rightly, that while his sister is willing to share with him all that is most agreeable to herself, she is by no means willing to do for his sake what is not agreeable, and he concludes his argument with the conviction, that notwithstanding her professions, hers is not true affection.

I do not mean that sisters ought to be the servants of their brothers, or that they should not, where domestics abound, leave the practical part of these duties to them. All that is wanted is stronger evidence of their watchfulness and their solicitude for their brothers' real comfort. The manner in which this evidence shall be given, must still be left to their judgment, and their circumstances. There are, however, a few simple rules, by which I should suppose all kindly affectioned women would be willing to be guided. No woman in the enjoyment of health should allow her brother to prepare his own meals at any time of the day, if it were possible for her to do it for him. No woman should allow her brother to put on linen in a state of dilapidation, to wear gloves or stockings in want of mending, or to return home without finding a neat parlor, a place to sit down without asking for it, and a cheerful invitation to partake of necessary refreshment.

All this I believe is often faithfully done, where the brother is a gentlemanly, attractive, and prepossessing person—in short, a person to be proud of in company, and

pleased with in private ; but a brother is a brother still, even where these attractions do not exist ; where the duty is most irksome, the moral responsibility is precisely the same as where it is most pleasing. Besides, who knows what female influence may not effect ? It is scarcely probable that a younger brother, treated by his sisters with perpetual contempt, almost bordering upon disgust, regarded as an intolerable bore, and got rid of by every practicable means, will grow up into a companionable, interesting, and social man ; or if he should, he would certainly reserve these qualities for exercise, beyond the circle of his own fireside, and for the benefit of those who could appreciate him better than his sisters.

The virtue of consideration, in the intercourse of sisters with brothers, is never more felt than in the sacred duty of warning them of moral evil, and encouraging them in moral good. Here we see in an especial manner the advantages arising from habits of personal attention and kindness. A woman who stands aloof from the common offices of domestic usefulness, may very properly extend her advice to a husband, a brother, or a son ; but when she has faithfully pointed out the fault she would correct, she must leave the object of her solicitude, with his wounded self-love unhealed, and his irritated feelings unrelieved. She has done her duty, and the impression most frequently remaining upon the mind of the other party is, either that she has done it in anger, or that it is impossible she can love a being of whom she entertains such hard thoughts.

The sister, who is accustomed to employ her hands in the services of domestic life, is, on these occasions, rich in resources. She feels the pain she has been compelled to give, and calculates how much she has to make up. It is a time for tenfold effort ; but it must be effort without display. In a gentle and unobtrusive manner, she does some extra service for her brother, choosing what would otherwise be degrading in its own nature, in order to prove in the most delicate manner, that though she can see a fault in

him, she still esteems herself his inferior, and though she is cruel enough to point it out, her love is yet so deep and pure as to sweeten every service she can render him.

It is impossible for the human heart to resist this kind of evidence, and hence arises the strong influence that women possess over the moral feelings of those with whom they are intimately associated.

If such, then, be the effect of kindness and consideration upon the heart of man, what must we expect when it operates in all its force and all its sweetness upon that of woman. In her intercourse with man, it is impossible but that woman should feel her own inferiority ; and it is right that it should be so. Yet, feeling this, it is also impossible but that the weight of social and moral duties she is called upon to perform, must, to an unsanctified spirit, at times appear oppressive. She has innumerable sources of disquietude, too, in which no man can partake ; and from the very weakness and susceptibility of her own nature, she has need of sympathies which it would be impossible for him to render. She does not meet him upon equal terms. Her part is to make sacrifices, in order that his enjoyment may be enhanced. She does this with a willing spirit ; but from error of judgment, or want of consideration, she does it so often without producing any adequate result, and so often without grateful acknowledgment, that her spirit sometimes sinks within her, and she shrinks back from the cares and anxieties of every day, with a feeling that the burden of life is too heavy to be borne.

Nor is the man to be blamed for this. He knows not half the foolish fears that agitate her breast. He could not be made to know, still less to understand, the intensity of her capability of suffering, from slight, and what to him would appear inadequate causes. But women *do* know what their sex is formed to suffer ; and for this very reason, there is sometimes a bond existing between sisters, the most endearing, the most pure and disinterested of any description of affection which this world affords.

I am the more inclined to think that the strength of this bond arises chiefly out of their mutual knowledge of each other's capability of receiving pain ; because, in families whose circumstances are uniformly easy, and who have never known the visitation of any deep affliction, we often see the painful spectacle of sisters forming obstacles to each other in their progress both to temporal and eternal happiness. They seem to think the hey-day of life so unlikely to be clouded, that they can afford, wantonly and perversely, to intercept the sunshine that would otherwise fall upon each other's path ; or to calculate so confidently upon the continued smoothness of the stream of time, that they sportively drive each other upon the rocks and the quicksands, which, even in the glad season of youth, will occasionally appear ; while the very fact of knowing each other's weak points of character, while it ought to excite their utmost tenderness, only affords them subjects for tormenting sarcasm, and biting scorn.

I have heard of hackney-coachmen in a certain highly civilized metropolis, who adopt the cruel practice of lashing a galled or wounded part, if they can find one in the wretched animals they drive ; but I hardly think the practice, abhorrent as it is, demands our condemnation more than that of the women who are thus false and cruel to each other—who, because they know exactly where to wound, apply the instrument of torture to the mind, unsparingly, and with the worst effect.

Let us glance hastily over the humiliating supposition that such a propensity does actually exist among women. Let us glance hastily, too, over the long train of minute and irremediable evils which the exercise of such a propensity is calculated to produce—the wounded feeling, the imagined injury, the suspicious dread, the bitter retort, and the secretly-cherished revenge. It is not enough for those who practise such habits to say, "I mean no harm : I love my sister, and would do her any signal service in my power." Opportunities of performing signal services

do not often fall in our way ; but while we wait for these, we have opportunities innumerable of soothing or irritating the feelings of others, as our own dispositions prompt—of repelling or attacking—of weaning affection, or of inspiring confidence ; and these ends are easily obtained, by the manner in which we conduct ourselves towards those whom Providence has placed immediately around us.

So many young women, however, escape the censure here implied, by their self-complacency on the score of general kindness, that it may, perhaps, be as well to speak more explicitly on this important subject. It is not, then, to direct unkindness that I refer, but to that general absence of kind consideration, which produces the same effect. Perhaps one sister is unreasonably elated at the success of some of her plans : and in the midst of her ecstatic joy she finds herself mimicked with all the air of ineffable contempt, by another. Perhaps one sister is rather unusually depressed in spirits from some incommunicable cause : the others pretend to weep, and make her gravity the subject of their merriment. Perhaps, in a moment of extreme embarrassment, she has committed some breach of good breeding, or looked awkward, or spoken foolishly : she finds afterwards that watchful eyes have been upon her, and that her every tone and movement have been the subject of ridicule in a little coterie of her sisters and her friends. Above all, perhaps she has gone a little too far in meeting the attentions of the other sex, and a merciless outcry is raised against her, with her sisters at its head.

Besides all this, there are often the strong wills of both parties set in opposition to each other, with a pertinacity that time itself is unable to subdue. For if, from the necessity of circumstances, one sister has on one occasion been compelled to give way, she is only fortified with fresh resolution for the next point of dispute, that she may enjoy her turn of victory and triumph. These disputes are often about the merest trifles in the world, things so entirely worthless and unimportant

in themselves, that to find they have been the cause of angry words or bitter feelings, may well excite our astonishment, at the same time that it ought to teach us fresh lessons of distrust of ourselves, of humility, and watchful care.

It is in this manner that sisters will sometimes embitter their early days, and make what ought to be the bower of repose, a scene of rivalry and strife. But let us change this harsh picture, and turn to the sunnier hours of youthful love, when sisters who have shared one home in childhood, then separated by adverse circumstances, return, after the lapse of years, to enjoy a few brief days of heart-communings beneath the same roof again. How lovely then are the morning hours, when they rise with the sun to lengthen out the day! They seat themselves in the old window, where their little childish hands were wont to pluck the tendrils of the rambling vine. They look out upon the lawn, and it is arrayed in the same green as when they gambolled there. The summer-apple tree, from whence they shook the rosy fruit, has moss upon its boughs; and the spreading ash reminds them they are no longer able to climb its topmost branch. What vicissitudes have they known—what change of place and circumstance have they experienced—since they planted the small osier that now stands a stately willow by the stream! We will not ask what cruel necessity first drove them separately from this peaceful abode—what blight fell on their prospects—what ruin on their hopes. Are they not sisters unchanged in their affection?—and in this very consciousness they have a world of wealth. Where is the keen, contemptuous gaze of satire now? Where are the bickerings, the envyings, the words of provocation? They would esteem it sacrilege to profane that place and hour with other thoughts than those of kindness. The mote and the beam have vanished from their eyes; they know each other's faults, but they behold them only to pity and forgive, or speak of them only to correct. Each heart is laid bare before the others, and the oil and

wine are poured in to heal the wounds which the stranger has made. Each has her own store of painful experience to unfold; and she weeps to find her sister's greater than her own. Each has had her share of insult, coldness, and neglect; and she is roused to indignation by hearing that her sister has had the same. Self becomes as nothing in comparison with the intense interest excited by a sister's experience; and as the secret anxieties of each bosom are revealed, fresh floods of tenderness are called forth, and the early bond of childhood, strengthened by vicissitudes and matured by time, is woven yet more closely around the hearts of all. Thus they go forth into the world again, strong in the confidence of that unshaken love which formed the sunshine of their childhood, and is now the solace of their riper years. They may weep the tears of the alien in the stranger's home, but they look forward to the summer-days of heart-warm confidence, when they shall meet again with the loveliest and the most beloved of all earth's treasures, and the wintry hours pass over them bereft of half their power to blight.

If such be the experience, and such the enjoyments of sisters separated by affliction, what must be the privileged lot of those, who, without any change of fortune, any falling off from the golden promise of early life, or any heart-rending bereavement, learn the happy art of finding their enjoyment in each other, by studying what will make each other happy? There may be faithful friendships formed in after years; but where a sister is a sister's friend, there can be none so tender, and none so true. For a brother, she may possibly entertain a more romantic attachment, because the difference in their circumstances may afford more to interest their feelings; but there is one universal point of failure in the friendship that exists between brothers and sisters—when a man marries, he finds in his wife all that he valued in his sister, with a more endearing sense of certainty in its possession; and when a woman marries, she finds all that she needed in the way of friendship and protection, with more

of tenderness, of interest, and identity, than it was possible for her to experience in the affection of her brother. Hence there arises, even in the uncalculating breast of youth, a suspicion that this friendship cannot last: and the breaking up of those establishments in which the sister has regulated the domestic affairs of her brother, is often a melancholy proof that the termination of their intimacy ought to have been calculated upon with more certainty than it generally is.

With sisters the case is widely different. They may seek in vain, through all the high and noble attributes of man, for that which is to be found alone in the true heart of woman; and, weak themselves, susceptible, dependent, and holding their happiness as it were with a sword suspended above their heads, they have need to be faithful to each other.

No friend in after life can know so well as a sister what is the peculiar and natural bias of the character. Education may change the manners, and circumstances may call new faculties to light; but the old leaven remains at the heart's core, and a sister knows it well.

Women often share with other friends enjoyments in which their sisters take no part; but they have not roamed together over that garden whose very weeds are lovely—the fertile and luxuriant garden of childhood; they have not drank together at that fountain whose bubbling waters are ever bright and pure—the early fountain of domestic joy; and the absence of this one charm in their friendship, must necessarily shut them out from participation in a world of associations, more dear, more beautiful, and more enduring than the longest after life can supply. I know not how it is with others, but it seems to me, that there never is—there never can be, amusement so original, so piquant, and so fraught with glee, as that which is enjoyed among happy sisters at their own fireside, or in their chamber, where one hardly would deny them *all* their idle hours of laughter and delight. The very circumstances which to one alone would have been a burden of heavy care, when participated in, are nothing;

and the mere fact of talking over all their daily trials, sets every bosom free to beat and bound with a new life.

We must not however forget, it is in seasons of affliction that we prove the real value of the deep well-spring of a sister's love. Other hands, and hands perhaps as skilful, may smooth our couch in sickness. Other voices may speak words of kindness in our hour of need, and other eyes may beam upon us with tenderness and love; but can they ever be like the hands that joined with ours in twining the rosy wreaths of infancy—the voices that spoke sweetly to us in the tones of childhood—the eyes that gazed with ours, in all the wonder of first dawning thought, abroad upon the beautiful creation, over the earth and sea, the green hills, and the waving woods, and up to the starry heavens, that page of glory too bright for human eye to read?

No; there is something in the home-fellowship of early life, that we cannot, if we would, shake off in the days of darkness and distress, when sickness clouds the brow, and grief sits heavily upon the heart. It is then that we pine for the faithful hand, the voice that was an echo to our own, and the kindred countenance so familiar in our childhood; and sisters who are kindly affectioned one towards another, are not slow to answer this appeal of nature. Tender and delicate women are not backward to make sacrifices in such a cause. They will hasten upon difficult and dangerous journeys, without feeling the perils they undergo. The anticipated accidents of time and chance have no weight with them, for self is annihilated by the overwhelming power of their affection. Obstacles cannot hinder, nor persuasion retard their purpose: a sister suffers, and they esteem it their highest privilege to assert, in defiance of all opposition, the indisputable claims of a sister's love. They have an inalienable right to share in her calamity, whatever it may be, and this right they will not resign to another.

But what shall stay my pen, when I touch upon this fertile and inexhaustible theme?

Sisters who have never known the deepest, holiest influence of a sister's love, will not be enabled, from any definition I can offer, to understand the purity, and the refreshing power of this well-spring of human happiness. Sisters who have known this, will also know that its height and its depth are beyond the power of language to describe; that it is, indeed, the love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it.

Is it not, then, worth all the cost of the most studious consideration, the most careful kindness, to win this treasure, and to make it ours? to purchase this gem, and to wear it next our hearts? I have pointed out some of the means by which it may be lost or won: I will now point out the most important reasons why it should be cherished with unceasing assiduity.

Sisters have an almost unbounded influence over each other; and all influence implies a proportionate degree of moral responsibility. The tone and temper of the human mind must be closely watched, and intimately studied, in order to apply with effect the means of benefit. The most zealous endeavors to do good, may fail for want of opportunity; but opportunity never can be wanting to those who share the same domestic hearth, who sit at the same board, and occupy the same chamber of rest. There must, with such, be unveilings of the heart before each other. There must be seasons for administering advice, and for imparting instruction, which the stranger never can command. But without the practice of those habits of kindness and consideration, so earnestly recommended here, the nearest relative, even the sister, may be placed on the same footing as the stranger, and have no more familiar access to the heart than the mere acquaintance.

It is therefore most important to the true Christian, whose desire is to invite others to a participation in the blessings she enjoys, that she should seek to promote the happiness of those around her, in such a way as to render them easy and familiar in her presence, and to convince them that she is in

word and deed their friend. Until this object is attained, little good can be done in the way of influence; but this secured, innumerable channels are opened, by which an enlightened mind may operate beneficially upon others.

We will imagine the case of a sister, whose feelings have been recently impressed with the importance of some hitherto unpractised duty, and who, at a loss how to begin with that improvement in her daily conduct which conscience points out as necessary to her peace, shrinks from the notice of the world, abashed at the idea of assuming more than she has been accustomed to maintain. With what fear and trembling will such a one, in her closet or her chamber, at the close of the summer's evening, or by the last glimmer of the winter's fire, when she and her sister share the silent hours of night together, unfold the burden of her spirit, and reveal the inner workings of her troubled mind! What should we say of a sister who treated this confidence with treachery, with ridicule or spleen? What should we say, but that she deserved to find the heart she has thus insulted a sealed book to her forever? What should we say, on the other hand, of her who met this confidence with tenderness and respect? That she enjoyed one of the greatest privileges permitted us in this our imperfect and degraded state, the privilege of imparting consolation and instruction at the same time, and of binding to her bosom the fond affection of a sister, as her comfort and support through all her after years.

It is a common remark for sisters to make upon each other, that they would have paid some deference to the religious scruple, or the pious wish, had it originated with a more consistent person. They should remember, that there must be a dawning of imperfect light, to usher in the perfect day; and that he who crushes the first germ of vegetation, commits an act equivalent to that of him who fells the stately tree. They should remember also it is not only the great and public efforts of Christian benevolence and charity, that are owned of God, and blessed with his approval; but that at the hour of midnight,

in the secret chamber, when the world takes no cognizance of our actions, His eye beholds them, and his ear is open to detect the slightest whisper that conveys its blessing or its bane to the heart of a familiar friend.

CHAPTER IX.

DOMESTIC HABITS,—CONSIDERATION AND KINDNESS.

THERE yet remain some aspects of human life, which it is impossible to pass over without the most earnest solicitude, that even if in all other capacities woman should forget her responsibilities, she might remember what is due from her in these. It is, then, to the sacred and inalienable bond between a daughter and her parents, that our attention must now be given.

It would seem but reasonable to suppose, that as soon as an amiable young woman of even partially enlightened mind, attained that stage of maturity when most rational beings begin to make use of their own powers of observation, she would naturally be led to reflect upon the situation of her mother, to contemplate her character and habits, and to regard with sympathy at least, the daily and hourly fatigues and anxieties which the nature of her domestic circumstances renders it necessary for her to undergo. If the young person has brothers or sisters less advanced in life than herself, she cannot fail to observe the assiduity with which all their wants are provided for by maternal care, as well as the self-denial and disinterested love, by which their safety is guarded, and their happiness preserved.

It is equally reasonable to suppose, that having such interesting subjects of grateful and affectionate consideration continually present to her eye, and to her mind, the young person would reason thus: "In this manner my mother has watched over me. Through long nights of weariness and exhaustion she has rocked me in her arms, and

stilled the sighs of her own bosom, from the fear of disturbing my repose. Not only has she denied herself every amusement and every gratification that would have drawn her away from the sphere of my childish pastimes, but also the wonted recreations necessary for the preservation of her health; until her cheek grew pale, and her step feeble in my service. I was then unable to make any other return than by my infantine caresses; and often when she was the most weary, or the most enfeebled, my pampered selfishness was the most requiring. Thus I have incurred a debt of gratitude, for the repayment of which the limit of a natural life will scarcely be sufficient. The summer of her existence is waning, mine is yet to come. I will so cultivate my feelings, and regulate my habits, as to enjoy the happiness of sharing her domestic burdens, and thus prove to her that I am not unmindful of the benefit I have myself derived from the long-suffering of a mother's love."

Do we find this to be the prevailing feeling among the young ladies of the present day? Do we find the respected and venerated mother so carefully cherished, that she is permitted to sit in perfect peace, the presiding genius, as she ought to be, over every department of domestic comfort—her cares lightened by participation with her affectionate daughters, her mind relieved of its burdens by their watchful love, herself arrayed in the best attire, as a badge of her retirement from active duty, and smiling as the steps of time glide past her, because she knows that younger feet are walking in her own sweet ways of pleasantness and peace?

Is this the picture presented in the present day by the far-famed homes of England? Do we not rather find the mother, the faithful and time-worn mother of the family, not only the moving spring of all domestic management, but the actual working power, by which every household plan is carried into practical effect? I refer of course to cases where domestics are few, and pecuniary means not over abundant, where we see the mother hastening with anxious solicitude to

answer every call from every member of the family ; as if her part in the duties of life was not only to have waited upon her children in infancy, but to conduct them to an easy and luxurious old age ; in short, to spare their feet from walking, their hands from labor, and their heads from thought.

I know that it is *mistaken* kindness in the mother to allow herself thus to become a household drudge. I know also that young ladies are easily satisfied with what appears to them a reasonable excuse, that "mamma prefers doing all these things herself," that "she is such a dear kind soul, they would not rob her even of the merit of mending their own garments." But let me ask how often she prefers doing these things herself, simply because of their unwillingness to do them ; and how their ungracious manner, when they have been asked to relieve her, has wounded her patient spirit, and rendered it less irksome to her to do the hardest manual labor, than to ask them again ? Let me remind them also, that there is a habit of doing things so awkwardly, that you will not be likely to be called upon for your services a second time ; and whether by accident or design, I will not presume to say, but some young ladies certainly appear to be great adepts in this method of performing their duties.

It is a most painful spectacle in families where the mother is the drudge, to see the daughters elegantly dressed, reclining at their ease, with their drawing, their music, their fancy-work, and their light reading ; beguiling themselves of the lapse of hours, days, and weeks, and never dreaming of their responsibilities ; but, as a necessary consequence of the neglect of duty, growing weary of their useless lives, laying hold of every newly invented stimulant to rouse their drooping energies, and blaming their fate when they dare not blame their God, for having placed them where they are.

These individuals will often tell you with an air of affected compassion—for who can believe it real ?—that "poor dear mamma is working herself to death." Yet no sooner

do you propose that they should assist her, than they declare she is quite in her element—in short, that she would never be happy if she had only half as much to do.

I have before observed, that it is not difficult to ascertain, on entering a family, whether the female members of it are, or are not actuated by habits of kindness and consideration ; and in no instance is it more easily detected than in the behavior of the daughters to their mother. We have probably all seen elegant and accomplished young ladies doing the honors of the house to their guests, by spreading before them that lavish profusion of books and pictures, with which every table of every drawing-room is, in these modern times, adorned. We have heard them expatiate with taste and enthusiasm upon the works of art, upon the beauties of foreign scenery, and the delights of travelling abroad ; while the mother is simultaneously engaged in superintending the management of the viands about to be spread before the company, or in placing the last leaf of garniture around the dessert, upon which her daughters have never condescended to bestow a thought.

It is easy, in these cases, to see by the anxious and perturbed appearance of the mistress of the house, when she does at last appear, that she has no assistance, but that which a very limited number of domestics could render, behind the scenes ; that every variety of the repast which her guests are pressed to partake of, has cost her both trouble to invent and labor to prepare ; and we feel that we are regaling ourselves too much at her expense.

There is a painful contrast between the care and anxiety depicted on her brow, and the indifference—the real or pretended ignorance with which the young ladies speak, when it is absolutely necessary, of any of those culinary compositions which they regard as belonging exclusively to the department of mothers and servants. If by any possible mischance, the good woman alludes to the flavor of her compounds, wishing, purely for the sake of her guests, that she

had added a little more of the salt, or the cinnamon,—indications of nausea, accompanied by symptoms of indignation and disgust, immediately manifest themselves among the young ladies, and they really wonder what mamma will be absurd enough to say next.

It is in such families as this, that, not only on days of leisure, but on days when extra services are sure to be wanted in the home department, the daughters always find some pressing call upon their attention out of doors. They have their morning calls to make; and there is that mysterious shopping to attend to, that never has an end. Indeed, one would almost think, from the frequency with which they resort to some of the most fashionable shops in town, that each of these young ladies had a peculiar taste for the mode of life prevailing in this particular sphere of exertion, were it not for the indignation she manifests at the remotest hint upon the duty of assisting her father in his.

It is astonishing how duties out of doors accumulate upon persons who are glad of any excuse to escape from those at home. No one can deny the necessity they are under of pursuing that course of mental improvement begun at school; and there are lectures on every science to be attended, borrowed books to be returned, and little coteries of studious young people to join in their morning classes.

It is also curious to observe that these young ladies who can with difficulty be induced to move about in their own homes, even to spare their mother's weary feet, who esteem it an act of oppression in her to send them to the highest apartment of the house, and of degradation in themselves to descend to the lowest,—it is curious to observe how these regard themselves as under an absolute necessity to walk out every day for their health, and how they choose that precise time for walking when their mothers are most busy, and their domestic peace, by a natural consequence, most likely to be invaded.

I would touch, with extreme delicacy, upon another branch of public occupation, because

I believe it to be entered upon, in innumerable instances, with feelings which do honor to humanity, and to that religion, under whose influence alone, such avocations can be faithfully carried on. But I must confess, there appears to me some ground to fear, that the amusement of doing public good, the excitement it produces, and especially the exemption it purchases from domestic requirements, has something to do with the zeal evinced by some young females to be employed as instruments in the dissemination of religious knowledge, and the augmentation of funds appropriated to benevolent uses.

Fearing, however, lest what might assume even the faintest coloring of uncharitableness, should fall from my pen on this delicate but most important subject, I will leave it with the individuals thus engaged, as fitter for their consideration, than for my remark. The world takes cognizance of their actions, and it is perhaps occasionally too lavish in its bestowment of their praises. But the world is a false friend, for it can applaud where there is little real merit, and condemn where there ought to be no blame.

Let not the really faithful and sincere be hurt by these insinuations. Their cause is beyond the penetration of man, and their real springs of action are known, where alone they can be truly estimated,—where alone they can meet with their just reward.

How different from the feelings called forth by habits such as I have just described, are those with which we take up our abode in a family, where we know that the morning sun has risen upon daughters, who meet its early beams with the cheerful determination, that whatever may be the business of the day, their hands, and not their mother's, shall do the actual work! Her experience, and her ever-guiding judgment, may direct their labors; but she who has so often toiled and watched for them, shall at least enjoy another opportunity of seeing how gladly and how richly they can repay the debt. The first thought that occupies their minds, is, how to guard her precious health. They meet her in the morning with affectionate solicitude,

and look to see if her cheek has become less pale ; whether her smile is languid, or cheerful—her step, weary or light.

I must again repeat, that one of the surest tests of true disinterested love is this readiness to detect indisposition. Persons who are in the habit of cherishing antipathies, seldom believe in the minor ailments of those they dislike. These facts render it the more surprising, that daughters should not *always* see the symptoms of exhausted strength, which too frequently manifest themselves in industrious and care-taking mothers ; that they should not watch with the tenderest anxiety the slightest indication of their valuable health being liable to decay. Yet so it is, that the mother of a family, who cares for every ailment in her household, is the last to be cared for herself, except in cases affording those beautiful exemplifications of filial duty to which allusion has just been made.

With daughters who are sensible of the strong claims of a mother's love, no care can be too great, no solicitude too tender, to bestow upon that beloved parent. They know that if deprived of this friend of their infancy—this guide of their erring feet—the world will be comparatively poor to them : and as the miser guards his hoarded treasure, they guard the life, for which that world would be incapable of supplying a substitute.

There are few subjects of contemplation more melancholy, than the waste of human love which the aspect of this world presents—of deep, tender, untiring, disinterested love, bestowed in such a manner as to meet no adequate return : and what must be the harvest gathered in, to a mother's faithful bosom, when she finds that she has reared up children who are too refined to share her humble cares, too learned and too clever to waste their talents on a sphere of thought and action like her own, and too much engaged in the pursuit of intellectual attainments, even to think of her !

Yet to whom do we look for consolation when the blight of sickness or sorrow falls upon our earthly peace, but to a mother ! And who but a mother is invited to partake

of our afflictions or our trials ? If the yoke of worldly degradation falls upon us, to a mother's love, for that mantle of comfort which is denied elsewhere. With more honored and distinguished associates, we have smiled away the golden hours of young prime ; but the bitter tears of conscience are wept upon a mother's bosom. We keep for our summer friends the anecdote, the story, the brilliant witticism, or the intelligent discourse ; but we tell to a mother's ear the tale of our distress, and the history of our wrongs. For all that belongs to the necessities and the wants of humanity, a mother's affection is sorely taxed ; why then do not daughters have the noble feeling to show before the world, and to let their actions speak the same language,—“ This is my earliest and my best friend ? ”

It is true, the mother may be far behind her daughter in the accomplishments of modern education ; she may, perhaps, occasionally betray her ignorance of polite literature, her want of acquaintance with the customs of polished society. But how can this in any way affect the debt of obligation incurred by her daughter and herself ? how can it lessen the validity of her daughter's gratitude for services received, and her affection for the faithfulness with which those services have been performed ?

Let us not believe of the young ladies of the present day that they *can* for any lengthened period, allow the march of mind to arrest the growth of their kindly feelings. Let us rather hope the time is coming when they will exhibit to the world that beautiful exemplification of true dignity—a high degree of intellectual culture rendered conducive to the happiness of those who claim their debt of gratitude, and their tenderest affection.

The next view we propose to take of the domestic habits of the women of this fair country, is that of their behavior in the relation between daughters and fathers.

The affection existing between fathers and daughters, is a favorite theme with the poets, both of romance and reality ; and the fine walks of life, we doubt not, are rich

stances of this peculiar kind of affection existing in a lovely, and most unquestionable form. Still there are points of view in which this subject, as illustrated by the customs of society in the present day, cannot be contemplated without pain.

I have often had occasion to speak of the duties of women towards their fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons, when engaged in the active pursuits of trade; and there is an anomaly presented by society of this class in England, which I am particularly anxious to point out to the rising generation.

There are vast numbers of worthy and industrious men, not only of the young and the middle-aged, but of those who are sinking into the vale of years, who spend almost the whole of their waking lives in scenes and occupations, from which almost every thing in the shape of enjoyment must necessarily be shut out.

In looking into the shops, the warehouses, the offices, and the counting-houses, of our commercial and manufacturing towns, we are struck with the destitution of comfort which everywhere prevails, and we ask,—“Are these the abodes of free-born, independent men?”

I should be sorry to be weak enough to suppose that an honest and industrious man may not be just as happy when he treads on boards, as when he treads on Turkey carpets; yet again, when we begin the early day with such individuals, and see what their occupations actually are, from nine in the morning, often until late in the afternoon or evening, for weeks, and months, and years, with scarcely any respite or relaxation, we naturally ask how are the wives and daughters of these men employed? For surely if there be a necessity for the father of the family to be situated thus, the kinder and more disinterested members of his household must be dwelling in abodes even more uncongenial and revolting than these. It is but reasonable to expect that we should find them in apartments less luxurious in their furniture, with windows less pervious to the light of day, their persons perched upon harder stools,

and altogether accommodated in an inferior manner. And this we are led to expect, simply because it is difficult to believe of generous-hearted women, that they would be willing to enjoy indulgences purchased at the sacrifice of the comfort of those they love, and by the degradation of those whom they look up to as their superiors.

Perhaps we are told that to man it is no sacrifice to spend his life in these dungeon-like apartments, shut in from the pure air, and compelled to deal with the extreme minutiae of what is neither interesting nor dignified in itself—that he regards not these trifling inconveniences, that he is accustomed to them, and that they are what the world esteems as manly and befitting; yet on being invited to pay our respects to the ladies of the family, we find ourselves transported into a scene so entirely different from that of his daily toil, that we are led to exclaim,—“How opposite must be the tastes of men and women in this sphere of life, in England!” A little more acquaintance with their domestic habits, however, enables us to discover that their tastes are not so different as their circumstances, and that the cares, the anxieties, and the actual labor, which the man is undergoing every day, are placing him on a very different footing, with regard to personal comfort, from the females of his household.

And how do the women strive to soothe these cares, to relieve these anxieties, and to lighten these labors? Do they not often make their own personal expenses extend to the extreme limit that his means will afford? Do they not dress, and visit, receive visitors, and practise all those elegant accomplishments, which their father's exertions have been taxed to pay for.

I know that the blame does not always rest with the female members of the family, but that men, especially when they first marry, are often pleased to behold their wives arrayed in the most costly habiliments which their means can procure: in addition to this, they believe that their interest in the world is advanced by keeping up a certain degree of costly display, both in dress and furniture.

As time advances, however, and their spirits grow less buoyant under the pressure of accumulated cares, especially if these cares have been unproductive of so golden a harvest as they had anticipated, and when daughters are growing up to double—nay, to treble their mother's expenditure, by adding all the imagined essentials of modern refinement; the father then perceives, perhaps too late to retrieve his ruined circumstances, the error into which he has been led; and fain would he then, in the midst of his bitter regrets, persuade his daughters to begin to think and act upon different principles from those which he has himself so thoughtlessly instilled.

Perhaps the father is sinking into the vale of years, his spirit broken, and some of the growing infirmities of age stealing insidiously upon him. His manly figure begins to stoop, his eye grows dim, and he comes home weary from his daily labor. What a melancholy picture is presented by the image of such a man going forth in public, with his gaily and expensively dressed daughters fluttering by his side!

Nor is this all. Let us follow them home. He rises early, wearied and worn as he is, and, snatching a hasty breakfast before his daughters have come down, goes forth to his daily avocations, leaving them to their morning calls, light reading, and fancy-work, until his return. At the close of the day, his step is again heard on the threshold. He has begun to feel that the walk is too much for him. Conveyances, in countless numbers, have passed him on his way, but these are not times for him to afford the luxury of riding, for a rival tradesman has just opened a tempting establishment in the neighborhood of his own, and the evils of competition are destroying half his gains. With a jaded look and feeble step, then, he enters his home. He wipes the gathering dew from his wrinkled forehead, sits down with a sigh almost amounting to a groan of despondency, and then looks round upon the well-furnished parlor, where the ladies of his family spend their idle hours.

We will not libel the daughters so far as to

say, they are guilty of neglect in not inviting him to partake of his evening meal. They may even press their kisses on his cheek, and express their welcome in the warmest terms. Supposing they have done all this, and that he is beginning to feel invigorated and refreshed, perhaps revived a little in his spirit by this evidence of their affection, at length he smiles; and that smile has been eagerly watched for, as the indication that his heart is warming into generosity.

Now is the auspicious time: "Papa, dear, have you ever thought again of the silk cloaks you promised us, as soon as Mr. Moody's bill was paid? And Emma wants a velvet bonnet this winter. And papa, dear, where did you say we could get the best satin shoes?" "My love," says the wife, in a graver, and more important tone, "These poor girls are sadly in want of drawing-paper—indeed, of pencils, and of every thing belonging to their drawing; for you know it is of no use having a master to teach them, unless we provide them with the necessary materials. And Isabella's music—I was positively ashamed to hear her play those old pieces again at Mrs. Melburn's last night."

We have seen pictures of birds of prey hovering about their dying victim; but I doubt whether a still more repulsive and melancholy picture might not be made, of a man of business in the decline of life, when he naturally asks for repose, spurred and goaded into fresh exertions, by the artificial wants and insatiable demands of his wife and daughters.

The root of the evil, I grant to be, not so much in the hard hearts of the individuals here described, as in the system of false refinement which prevails in this country. But whatever the cause or the remedy may be, those will be happy days for England, when her noble-minded women, despite the prejudices of early education, shall stand forth before the world, and show that they dare be dutiful daughters rather than ladies of fashion; and that the principles of integrity, generosity, and natural feeling, have taught them never to wish for enjoyment purchased by

the sacrifice of a father's health, or a husband's peace.

I know not whether it often occurs to the young, or only to those whose experience has been of longer duration, to make this observation upon human nature—that it is not *intentional* offence, or *intentional* injury, which always inflicts the severest pain. A mother who, by her ill-judged indulgence, fosters in her child a selfish and domineering temper, and thus renders such evil dispositions identified with the very nature of that child, so that it is a stranger to any other principles of action, is as much hurt when, in after life, her child is selfish and domineering towards herself, as if he actually departed from his accustomed line of conduct, for the purpose of being pointedly unkind to her. In the same way, the father who has brought up his family in habits of extravagance, when he feels the tide of prosperity turning against him, forgets that those habits are necessarily stronger than his reasoning, and is wounded to the soul to think that his daughters are not more considerate. Upon the same principle of groundless expectation, we often see well-meaning but injudicious parents taking extreme pains to guard their children against one particular error in conduct, or one species of vice, yet neglecting to lay that only sure foundation of moral conduct which is to be found in religious principle; and these, again, are shocked to find, as their children advance in life, that all their endeavors have been unproductive of the desired result. Nor must I, while pointing out errors in the behavior of children towards their parents, omit to observe, that if parents would be more solicitous to instil into their minds the importance of relative and social duties faithfully performed, instead of captiously reproving them for every deviation from the strict line of these duties, they would find themselves more happy in their families, more tenderly watched over in sickness and sorrow—more cherished and revered in the decline of life.

Still, though the fault may, in some cases, have been originally with the parents, there is little excuse for daughters, who are of age

to think and act for themselves. Habit, we know, is proverbially accounted second nature; but we know also, that even our first nature is capable of being changed.

He who has become subject to a painful and dangerous disease, through the neglect or mismanagement of those who had the care of him in early life, does not content himself with saying it was the maltreatment of his nurse that brought upon him this calamity. If the disease admits of remedy—if it even admits of alleviation—he is as earnest in seeking out and applying the proper means of relief, as if he had been the sole cause of his own affliction. And shall we confine our powers of reasoning rightly, and acting promptly, to the promotion of the benefit of the body, and leave the immortal mind to suffer for eternity, without applying such remedies as are provided for its use?

Whether the evil be in the original taint of our nature, or in the same nature inherent in another form, and operating upon us through the medium of injudicious treatment, we stand in precisely the same position with regard to moral responsibility, and accountability to the Searcher of all human hearts.

It is right the tender sympathy of our friends should be excited, when we tell them that the faults for which they blame us were fostered and encouraged by the mistaken judgment of our parents in early life; but there is a tribunal at which this plea will be of little avail, if, while the means of reformation are yet within our reach, we suffer such habits to strengthen and establish themselves as part of our character; and I would earnestly recommend to the young women of England, that they should rouse themselves, and act upon the first conviction, that the advantages resulting from what is called a finished education, are but so many additional talents lent them, for employment in the service of that gracious Father, who has charged his children with the keeping of each other's happiness, and who, when he instituted the parental bond, and filled the mother's heart with love, and touched with

tenderness the father's firmer soul, was pleased to appoint them after-years of weakness, suffering, and infirmity, when their children would be able to enjoy the holy privilege of conducting their feeble steps in peace and safety towards the close of their earthly pilgrimage.

CHAPTER X.

DOMESTIC HABITS,—CONSIDERATION AND KINDNESS.

THAT branch of the subject upon which I am now entering being one of so much importance in the sum of human happiness as scarcely to admit of comparison with any other, it might be expected that I should especially direct the attention of the reader to the duties of consideration and kindness in the married state, by entering into the minutiae of its especial requirements, and recommending them with all the earnestness of emphatic detail, to the serious consideration of the women of England. Happy indeed should I be to do this, did I not feel that, at the same time, I should be touching upon a theme too delicate for the handling of an ordinary pen, and venturing beyond that veil which the sacredness of such a connection is calculated to draw over all that is extreme in the happiness or misery of human life.

I shall therefore glance only upon those points which are most obvious to the eye of a third party; and in doing this, it will be found, that many of the remarks I have made upon the behavior of daughters to their fathers, are equally applicable to that of wives towards their husbands. There is, however, this great difference—the connection existing between married people is almost invariably a matter of choice. A daughter may, sometimes, imagine herself excused, by supposing that her father is too uncongenial in mind and character, for her to owe him much in the way of companionship.

She may think his manners vulgar, and believe that if she had a father who was a gentleman, she would be more attentive and considerate to him. But her husband cannot have married her without her own consent; and therefore the engagement she has voluntarily entered into, must be to fulfil the duties of a wife to him *as he is*, and not *as she* could have wished or imagined him to be.

These considerations lead me to a view of the subject which I have often been compelled to take with deep regret, but which I fear no human pen, and still less mine, will be able to change: it is the false system of behavior kept up between those who are about to enter into the relation of marriage; so that when they settle down upon the true basis of their own characters, and appear to each other what they actually are, the difference is sometimes so great, as almost to justify the inquiry whether the individual can really be the same.

I presume not to expatiate upon that process denominated courtship, as it is frequently carried on by men. I venture not to accuse them of injustice, in cherishing, in their early intercourse with the object of their choice, the very faults which they afterwards complain of in the wife. My chief solicitude is for my own sex, that they should not only be faithful after marriage, but upright and sincere before; and that they should scorn to engage a lover, by little acts of consideration and kindness which they are not prepared to practise even more willingly towards the husband.

I have known cases in which a kind-hearted woman would have esteemed herself robbed of a privilege, if her lover had asked any other person than herself, so much as to mend his glove. Yet is it not possible for the same woman, two years after marriage, to say—"My sister, or my cousin, will do that for you. I am too busy now."

Nor is it the act alone, but the manner in which the act is done, that conveys a false impression of what will be the manner of that woman after marriage. I charge no one with *intentional* deception. The very ex-

pression of the countenance is that of real and intense enjoyment, while the act of kindness is performed. All I regret is, that the same expressions of countenance should not always accompany the same performance in the wife. All women of acute sensibility must feel the loss of personal attractions, when time begins to tell upon their youthful charms. But, oh! that they would learn by the warning of others, rather than by their own experience, that it is most frequently the want of this expression of cheerful, genuine, disinterested kindness, than the want of youthful beauty, that alienates their husbands' love, and makes them objects of indifference, or worse.

The cultivation of acquaintance before marriage, with a view to that connection taking place, for the most part goes but a very little way towards the knowledge of real character. The parties usually meet in the hey-day of inexperienced youth; and while they exult in the unclouded sunshine of life, their mutual endeavors to please are rewarded by an equal willingness to be pleased. The woman, especially, is placed in a situation highly calculated to excite the greatest possible degree of complacency. She is treated by a being upon whom she depends, and he most probably her superior, as if she was incapable of error, and guiltless of a single fault. Perhaps she warns him of his mistake, speaks of her own defects, and assures him that she is not the angelic creature he supposes her to be; but she does all this with so sweet a grace, and looks all the while so pleased to be contradicted, that her information goes for nothing; and we are by no means assured that she is not better satisfied it should be so.

If, for instance, she really wishes him to know that her temper is naturally bad, why is she invariably so mild, and bland, and conciliating in his presence? If she wishes him to believe that she has a mind not capable of entering fully into the interest of his favorite books, and the subjects of his favorite discourse, why does she *appear* to listen so attentively when he reads, and ask so many

questions calculated to draw him out into conversation? If she wishes him to suppose that she is not *always* a lively and agreeable companion, why does she not occasionally assume the tone and manner so familiar to her family at home—answer him shortly, hang down her head, and mope away the evening when he is near her? If she really wishes him to believe her, when she tells him that she is but ill-informed, and wanting in judgment; why, when he talks with her, does she take so much pains to express opinions generally believed to be correct, and especially such as coincide with his own? If she occasionally acts from caprice, and really wishes him to know that she does so, to the injury of the comfort of those around her; why, whenever she practises in this way upon him, does she win him back again, and soothe his feelings with redoubled kindness, and additional solicitude to please?

Perhaps she will tell me she acts in this manner, because it would be unamiable and ungenerous to do otherwise. To which I answer, If it be unamiable and ungenerous to the lover, how much more so must it be to the husband? I find no fault with the sweetness, the irresistible charm of her behavior before marriage. It is no more than we *ought* to practise towards those whose happiness is bound up with ours. The falling off afterwards, is what I regard as so much to be deplored in the character of woman; for wherever this is observed, it seems to indicate that her mind has been low enough to be influenced by a desire of establishing herself in an eligible home, and escaping the stigma foolishly attached to the situation of an old maid.

I have devoted an earlier chapter in this work to the consideration of dress and manners; but I have omitted one of the most striking points of view in which these subjects can be regarded,—the different characters they sometimes assume before, and after, marriage.

When a young lady dresses with a view to general approbation, she is studiously solicitous to observe, what she believes to be,

the rules of good taste ; and more especially, if a gentleman, whose favorable opinion she values, evinces any decided symptoms of becoming her admirer. She then meets him with her hair arranged in the most becoming style ; with the neat shoe, and pure-white gloves, which she has heard him commend in others ; with the pale scarf, the quiet-colored robe, and with the general aspect of her costume accommodated to his taste. He cannot but observe this regard to his wishes, and he notes it down as a proof of amiable temperament, as well as sympathy of habitual feeling. Auguring well for his future happiness with a woman, who even in matters of such trifling moment is willing to make his wish her law, he prevails upon her at last to crown that happiness by the bestowment of her hand.

In the course of three years, we look in upon this couple in the home they are sharing together. We suppose the lady to be the same, yet cannot feel quite sure, her whole appearance is so changed. The hair that used to be so carefully braided, or so gracefully curled, is now allowed to wander in dishevelled tresses, or swept away from a brow, whose defects it was wont to cover. There is a forlornness in her whole appearance, as if she had not, as formerly, any worthy object for which to study these secondary points of beauty ; and we inwardly exclaim, How the taste of her husband must have changed, to allow him to be pleased with what is so entirely the opposite of his original choice ! On a second observation, however, we ask whether he actually is pleased, for there is nothing like satisfaction in the look with which he turns away from the unbecoming cap, the soiled kerchief, and the neglected aspect of the partner of his life.

If married women, who allow themselves to fall into that state of moral degradation, which such an appearance indicates, feel pained at symptoms of estrangement in their husbands' affections, they must at least be satisfied to endure the consequences of their own want of consideration, without sympa-

thy or commiseration. They may, perhaps, feel disposed to say their punishment is too severe for such a fault. They love their husbands as faithfully as ever, and expected from them a love that would have been more faithful in return, than to be shaken by any change in mere personal appearance. But let me tell them, that the change which owes its existence to our own fault, has a totally different effect upon the feelings of a friend, from that which is the consequence of our misfortune ; and one of the most bitter and repulsive thoughts that can be made to rankle in a husband's bosom, is, that his wife should only have deemed it necessary to charm his eye, until she had obtained his hand ; and that, through the whole of his after life he must look in vain for the exercise of that kind consideration in consulting his tastes and wishes, that used to lend so sweet a charm to the season of youthful intercourse.

It is a subject well calculated to inspire the most serious regret, that men should practise throughout the season of courtship, that system of indiscriminate flattery which lulls the better judgment of a woman into a belief that she must of necessity be delightful to him—delightful, faults and all—nay, what is infinitely worse than this, into a secret suspicion, that the faults which her female friends have been accustomed to point out, have no existence in reality, and that to one who knows and loves her better, she must appear in her naturally amiable and attractive character.

Could she be persuaded, on that important day, when she is led home from the altar, adorned, attended upon, and almost worshipped—could she be persuaded to cast one impartial glance into her own heart, she would see that the treasure she was bestowing, had many drawbacks from its value, and that all the happiness it was in her power to confer, must necessarily, from the nature of that heart, be accompanied with some alloy.

"Alas !" she would say, after this examination, "he knows me not. Time will reveal to him my secretly cherished faults." And

when this conviction was confirmed through the days and years of her after life, she would esteem it but a small sacrifice of time and patience to endeavor to render herself personally attractive to him. Nay, so grateful would she feel for his charitable forgiveness, that when the evil dispositions inherent in her nature were thrown into more glaring light, she would esteem it a privilege to be able by the simplest means to convince him, that, with all her faults, she was not so guilty of a disregard to his wishes, as to refuse in these minor points to conform her habits to his taste.

Many of the remarks into which I have been led by a consideration of the subject of dress, are equally applicable to that of manner, as relates to its connection with social and domestic happiness before and after marriage. We are all aware that neither beauty, nor personal adornment, nor the most brilliant conversation, can be rendered altogether charming to any individual, without the accompaniment of a peculiar kind of manner, by which that individual is made to feel that he partakes in the pleasant thoughts and kind feelings of the party whose object it is to please.

Women who possess the tact to know exactly *how* to give pleasure, are peculiarly skilled in those earnest looks, and cheerful smiles, and animated responses, which constitute more than half the charm of society. We sometimes see, in social evening circles, the countenance of an intelligent young lady lighted up with such a look of deep and glowing interest as to render her perfectly beautiful, during the time she is addressed by a distinguished friend, or even an attractive stranger.

I will not say that the same expression is not always worn by the same individual at the domestic hearth, when she listens to the conversation of her husband. I will not so far libel my countrywomen, because I know that there are noble and admirable instances of women who are too diffident and too simple-hearted to study how to shine in public, who yet, from the intensity of their

own feelings, the brilliance of their own powers of perception, and the deep delight of listening to the gentle tones of a beloved voice, when it speaks at once to their understanding and their hearts,—I know that such women do wear an aspect of almost spiritual beauty, and speak and act with an almost superhuman grace, when no eye beholds them but that which is most familiar, and which is destined to look upon the same path of life with theirs.

After acknowledging these instances, I must suppose a case; and for the sake of argument imagine what would be the feelings of a husband, who, in mixed society, should see his wife the centre of an animated group—pleased herself, and giving pleasure to all around her—the expression of intense interest depicted on her countenance, and mingled with an apprehension so lively and vivid, as almost to amount to presentiment of every probable turn in the discourse; her eyes lighted up with animation, and her cheeks dimpled over with the play of sunny smiles—what would be the feelings of a husband who should have marked all this, and when at his own fireside he felt the want of pleasant converse to beguile the winter's evening of its length, should be answered by that peculiar tone of voice, that depression of countenance, and that forbidding manner, which are more powerful in imposing silence than the most imperative command?

In fact, there is a manner all-powerful in its influence upon domestic happiness, in which there seems to be imbodyed a spirit of evil too subtle for detection, and too indefinite to be described by any name. It is not precisely a sullen manner, nor, in its strictest sense, a repulsive manner; for the individual who adopts it may be perfectly civil all the while. It does not consist in pointed insult, or, indeed, in any thing pointed. It conveys no reproach, nor suffers the party upon whom it operates to suppose that redress is the thing desired. It invites no explanation, and makes no complaint. Its only visible characteristic is, that the eye is

never raised to gaze upon its object, but invariably directed past it, as if that object had no ubiquity—in short, had no existence, and was not required to have any.

This is the manner I should describe as most expressive of natural antipathy without the energy of active dislike; and yet this manner, as before stated, is so potent in its influence, that it seems to lay, as it were, an unseen axe at the root of all domestic confidence; and difficult as it must necessarily be, for a woman to maintain this manner, there have been instances in which it has destroyed a husband's peace, without affording him even the satisfaction of any definite cause of complaint. There are degrees of the same manner practised every day in all classes of society, but never without a baneful effect, in poisoning our kindly feelings, and decreasing the sum of human happiness.

We are all too much disposed to put on what I would describe as company manners. Not only are our best dresses reserved for our visitors, but our best behavior too. I have often been struck with the bland smiles that have been put on in welcoming guests, and the appearance of extreme interest with which such guests have been listened to; when, five minutes after their departure, the same subject, having been taken up by some unfortunate member of the family, no interest whatever has been elicited, no smile awakened, and scarcely so much as a patient and respectful answer drawn forth. I have observed, also, with what forbearance the absurdities of a stranger have been endured: the twice-told tale, when begun again in company, has apparently been as fresh and entertaining as the first time it was heard. The folly of ignorance has then had no power to disgust, nor the impertinence of curiosity to offend.

When I have marked all this, I have thought, If we could but carry away our company-smiles, to the home fireside, speak always in the gentle and persuasive tones made use of in the evening party, and move along the domestic walk with that suavity of

manner which characterizes our intercourse with what is called society,—how pleasant would those homes become to the friends who look for their hours of refreshment and relaxation there; and how seldom should we have to complain of our companionship being neglected for that of more brilliant circles and more interesting scenes!

In writing on the subject of consideration and kindness before and after marriage, I purposely confined my remarks to a very slight and superficial view of the subject. The world that lies beyond, I cannot regard as within the province of my pen—I might almost say, within the province of any pen: for such is the difference in human character, and in the circumstances by which character is developed, that it would scarcely be possible to speak definitely of a line of conduct by which the lives of any two married women could properly be regulated, because such conduct must bear strict reference to the habits and temperament of the husband, whose peculiarities of character would have to be taken into account.

I must therefore be satisfied to recommend this wide and important field of contemplation to the serious attention and earnest solicitude of my countrywomen; reminding them, only, before we leave this subject, that if, in the first instance, they are induced by selfish feeling to consult their immediate interest or convenience, they are, in a secondary manner, undermining their own happiness by failing to consult that of the being whose destiny is linked with theirs.

What pen can describe the wretchedness of that woman, who finds herself doomed to live unloved; and to whom can she look for confidence and affection, if shut out from the natural sources of enjoyment at home?—There is no loneliness—there can be none—in all the waste or peopled deserts of this world, bearing the slightest comparison with that of an unloved wife. She stands amidst her family like a living statue among the marble memorials of the dead—instinct with life, yet paralyzed with death—the burning tide of natural feeling circling round her

heart—the thousand channels frozen, through which that feeling ought to flow.

So pitiable, so utterly destitute of consolation is this state, to which many women have reduced themselves by mere carelessness of the common and familiar means of giving pleasure, that I must be pardoned for writing on this subject with more earnestness than the minuteness of its detail would seem to warrant. We may set off in life with high notions of loving, and of being loved, in exact proportion to meritorious desert, as exemplified in great and noble deeds. But on a closer and more experimental view of human life, we find that affection is more dependent upon the minutiae of every-day existence; and that there is a greater sum of affection really lost by filtering away through the failure of seeming trifles, than by the shock of great events.

We are apt also to deceive ourselves with regard to the revival of affection after its decay. Much may be done to restore equanimity of mind, to obtain forgiveness, and to be reinstated in esteem; but I am inclined to think, that when once the bloom of love is gone—when it has been brushed away by too rude or too careless a hand, it would be as vain to attempt to restore it, as to raise again the blighted flower, or give wings to the butterfly which the storm had beaten down.

How important is it, then, that women should guard, with the most scrupulous attention, this treasure of their hearts,—this blessing of their homes; and since we are so constituted, that trifles make the sum of human happiness, that they should lose no opportunity of turning these trifles to the best account!

Besides these considerations, there is one awful and alarming fact connected with this subject, which ought to be indelibly impressed upon our minds; it is, that we have but a short time, it may be but a very short time, allowed us for promoting the comfort or the happiness of our fellow-creatures. Even if we ourselves are spared to reach the widest range of human existence, how few of those we love will number half that length of years!

Even the hand that is clasped in' ours, the eyes that reflect the intelligence of our souls, and the heart that beats an echo to every pulse we feel, may be cold and motionless before to-morrow's sun has set!

Were the secrets of every human bosom laid open, I believe we should behold no darker passage in the page of experience, than that which has noted down our want of kindness and consideration to those who are gone before us to another world.

When we realize the agonizing sensation of bending over the feeble frame of a beloved friend, when the mortal conflict is approaching, and the fluttering spirit is about to leave its earthly tenement; and looking back upon a long, dark past, all blotted over with instances of our unkindness or neglect, and forward unto that little span of life, into which we would fain concentrate the deep affection, that, in spite of inconsistencies in our past conduct, has all the while been cherished in our hearts,—with what impassioned earnestness would we arrest the pale messenger in his career, and stay the wings of time, and call upon the impatient spirit to return, to see, and feel, and understand our love!

Perhaps we have been negligent in former seasons of bodily affliction; have not listened patiently to the outpouring of natural feeling, and have held ourselves excused from attendance in the sick-chamber; and there has gone forth that awful sentence, "It is the last time!"—the last time we can offer the cordial draught, or smooth the restless pillow, or bathe the feverish brow! And now, though we would search all the treasures of the earth for healing medicine, and rob ourselves of sleep, and rest, and sustenance, to purchase for the sufferer one hour of quiet slumber, and pour out tears upon that aching brow, until its burning heat was quenched;—it is in vain, for the eye is glazed, the lips are paralyzed, the head begins to droop, and expiring nature tells us it is all *too late*!

Perhaps we have not been sympathizing, kind, or tender, in those by-gone years of familiar confidence, when we were called upon to share the burdens of a weary bosom,

whose inner feelings were revealed to us, and us alone. Yee, we can remember, in the sunny days of youth, and through the trials of maturer life, when the appeals of affection were answered with fretfulness or captious spleen, when estrangement followed, and we could not, if we had desired it, then draw back the love we had repulsed. And now we hear again that awful sentence—"It is the last time!"—the last time we can ever weep upon that bosom, or lay our hand upon that head, or press a fond, fond kiss upon those closing lips. Fain would we then throw open the floodgates of our hidden feeling, and pour forth words of more than tenderness. Alas! the once wished-for tide would flow, like the rising surf around a shattered wreck—*too late!*

Perhaps we have been guilty of a deeper sin against our heavenly Father, and the human family whose happiness he has in some measure committed to our trust. And, oh! let the young ask diligently of the more experienced, how they can escape the aching consciousness that may pursue them to the grave, and only then commence the reality of its eternal torment—the consciousness of having wasted all our influence, and neglected all our means of assisting those who were associated with us by the closest ties, in preparing for another and a better world.

Perhaps they once sought our society for the benefit of spiritual communion. Perhaps they would have consulted us in cases of moral difficulty, had we been more gracious and conciliating. Perhaps we have treated lightly the serious scruples they have laid before us, or, what is still more probable, perhaps the whole tenor of our inconsistent lives has been the means of drawing them away from the altar, on which they saw such unholy incense burning. And now, "it is the last time!"—the last time we can ever speak to them of eternity, of the state of their trembling souls before the eye of a just and holy God, or raise their fainting hopes to the mercy still offered to their acceptance, through Him who is able to save to the uttermost. Oh! for the trumpet of an archangel, to

awake them from the increasing torpor of bodily and spiritual death! Oh! for a voice that would imbody, in one deep, awful, and tremendous word, all—all for which our wasted life was insufficient! It is in vain that we would call upon the attributes of nature and of Deity to aid us. They are gone! It was the final struggle; and never more will that pale marble form be roused to life by words of hope or consolation. They are gone. The portals of eternity are closed—*It is too late!*

Let it be a subject of grateful acknowledgment with the young, that to them this fearful sentence has not yet gone forth—that opportunity may still be offered them to redeem the time. They know not, however, how much of this time remains at their disposal; and it might occasionally be some assistance to them in their duties, would they cultivate the habit of thinking, not only of their own death, but of the death of their companions.

There are few subjects more calculated for solemn and affecting thought, than the fact that we can scarcely meet a blooming circle around a cheerful hearth, but one individual at least, in that circle, will be cherishing in her bosom the seeds of some fatal malady.

It is recorded of the Egyptians, that among their ancient customs they endeavored to preserve the salutary remembrance that they were liable to death, by placing at their festal boards, a human skeleton; so that while they feasted, and enjoyed the luxuries of this life, they should find it impossible to beguile themselves into a belief in its perpetual duration.

It is not necessary that we should resort to means so unnatural and repulsive; though the end is still more desirable for us, who are trusting in a better hope, to keep in view. Neither is it necessary that the idea should be invested with melancholy, and associated with depression. It is but looking at the truth. And let us deceive ourselves as we may, the green church-yard with its freshly covered graves—the passing-bell—the slowly-moving hearse—the shutters closed upon the apartment where the sound of merriment

was lately heard—the visitations of disease within our homes—even the hectic flush of beauty—all remind us that the portion of time allotted for the exercise of kindly feeling towards our fellow-creatures, is fleeting fast away ; and that to-day, if ever, we must prove to the great Shepherd of the Christian fold, that we are not regardless of that memorable injunction—*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, If ye have love one to another.*

CHAPTER XI.

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE OF THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND—CAPRICE—AFFECTATION—LOVE OF ADMIRATION.

THE higher admiration we bestow upon the nature and attributes of any subject of contemplation, the more painful and acute is our perception of its defects. And thus when we think of woman in her most elevated character, consider the extent of her capabilities, and her wonderful and almost un-failing power of being great on great occasions, we are the more disposed to regret that she has a power equally unlimited, of making herself little ; and that, when indolence or selfishness is allowed to prevail over her better feelings, this power is often exercised to the annoyance of society, and to her own disgrace.

Those who understand the construction of woman's mind, however, will find some excuse for this, in the natural versatility of her mental faculties, in the multiplicity of her floating ideas, in the play of her fancy, and in the constant overflow of her feelings, which must expend themselves upon some object, either worthy or unworthy ; and which consequently demand the utmost attention to what is really important, in order that this waste of energy, of feeling, and emotion, may be avoided.

The word caprice, in its familiar acceptation, is one of very indefinite signification. I

shall endeavor to confine my use of it to those cases in which the whim of the moment is made the rule of action, without any reference to right reason, or even to the gratification or annoyance of others ; and I shall endeavor to show, that with regard to this feminine fault, as well as many others, women are not fairly dealt with by society.

How often do we see, for instance, a beautiful and fascinating girl expressing the most absurd antipathies, or sympathies, and acting in the most self-willed and irrational manner ; in short, performing a part, which, in a plain woman, would be regarded not only as repulsive, but unamiable in the utmost degree ! yet because she is beautiful, her admirers appear to think all these little freaks of fancy highly becoming, and captivating in the extreme. If she chooses to find fault with what all the rest of the company are admiring—how delightfully peculiar are her tastes ! If she will walk out when others are not disposed for walking—what obsequious attendants she immediately finds, all ready to say the evening is fine, the air inviting, and the general aspect of nature exactly what she chooses it should be ! If she persists in refusing to play a favorite air—what a dear capricious creature she always is ! and in this, as well as other whims, she must be humored to the extent of her selfishness.

I will not pretend to say that beauty alone can command this influence, though it unquestionably has a power beyond all calculation. The being who thus assumes the right to tyrannize, must have obtained the suffrages of society by the exercise of some particular powers of fascination, which she wants the judgment and good feeling to use for better purposes.

We have seen her, then, a sort of idol in society, the centre of an admiring circle, endowed with the royal privilege of incapability of doing wrong. We have seen her admired, apparently beloved ; and we turn to the little coteries of dissentients who are sure to be formed in all companies where a being of this description is found. Among these we find that her character is treated, not with justice,

though that had been enough, but with the sharp inspection of keen and envious eyes; and we are soon convinced, that if in public she is raised to the distinction of an idol, she is in private most unscrupulously deprived of the honors she was but too willing to assume.

I speak not of this instance, in order to bring forward the want of charity and kindly feeling prevailing in the world. I simply state that such things are,—in order to show that the deference paid to the caprices of women by a few partial admirers, is no real test of the favor they obtain in general society. And if, in such instances where youth and beauty cast their lovely mantle over every defect, woman's faults are still brought to light, what must be her situation—what her treatment by the world, where she has nothing of this kind to palliate her weakness, or recommend her to the charity and forbearance of her fellow-creatures?

Caprice, like many other feminine faults, appears almost too trifling in its minutiae—too insignificant in its detail, to deserve our serious condemnation; yet, if caprice has the power to make enemies, and to destroy happiness, it ought not to be regarded as unimportant in itself. With regard to many other subjects of consideration connected with the virtues or the errors of woman, we have had to observe, that each individual act may be almost beneath our notice in itself, and yet may form a part of such a whole, as the utmost capabilities of human intellect would be unable to treat with justice and effect.

The case is precisely the same with feminine caprice. It is but a slight deviation either from sense or propriety, to *choose* to differ from the majority of opinions, to choose to do, and to make others do, what is not agreeable to them, or to refuse to do what would give them pleasure. But, when this mode of conduct becomes habitual, when beauty fades, and the idol of society is cast into the shade, when disappointment irritates the temper, and “sickness rends the brow,” and grief sits heavily upon the soul—in these seasons of nature's weakness, when woman's

trembling heart is apt to sink within her, to what loneliness and bitterness of experience must she be consigned, if her own indulgence of caprice has driven from her all the friends who might have administered to her consolation in this hour of need!

This view of the subject, however, she is certainly at liberty to take, and counting the cost, to indulge her momentary wishes at the expense of her future peace. The question of most serious importance, is, how far we are justified in trifling with the happiness, the comfort, or even the convenience of others, for the sake of indulging our own caprices?

I have before stated, that in acting from caprice, we act without reference to common sense, or right feeling. If, therefore, a woman *chooses* to be capricious, there is no help for it. Argument has no power to convince her that she is wrong, and opposition only strengthens her determination: no matter how many are made to suffer annoyance from her folly, or grief from her perverseness. It is her choice to be capricious, and they must abide by the consequences. Thus she exemplifies—it may be said in actions extremely minute and unimportant—but still she does exemplify, how much mischief may be done by a weak judgment, a selfish temper, and an unenlightened mind.

The domestic habits and social intercourse of the women of England, are peculiarly favorable to the counteraction of the natural tendency to caprice in the female character, because they afford a supply of constant occupation, and invest that occupation with the dignity of moral duty. When, therefore, we find individuals acting from caprice, in the middle classes of English society, we know that it exists in spite of circumstances; and we consequently regard with proportionate condemnation, those who are so far deficient in good taste and good feeling, as to prefer such a mode of exhibiting their follies to the world.

It might require some degree of philosophical examination, accurately to define the nature and origin of caprice; yet so far as I have been able to ascertain by observations

upon society in general, I should be inclined to describe it as arising from the same cause as affectation; and both to owe their existence to a desire to attract attention, or a belief that attention is attracted by what is said or done. Caprice refers more to a weak and vain desire to be important; affectation, to a desire to make ourselves admired. Both are contemptible in the extreme. Yet one is so powerful in provoking the temper, the other in exciting ridicule and disgust, that both are worthy of our careful examination, in order that we may detect the lurking evil wherever it exists in our own conduct.

Affectation is in practice a species of minute deception; in effect, an alpalbe mockery of that which is assumed. I am aware that it is often the accompaniment of extreme bashfulness and diffidence of self; but this is seldom or never the case, except where there is a secret, yet strong desire, if it were possible, to be the object of admiration to others. Along with affectation, there is generally a prevailing impression of being the object upon which all, or at least many, eyes are fixed. For who would be at the trouble of all those distortions of countenance, inflexions of voice, and manœuvrings of body and limb, which we often observe in company, did they not believe themselves to be

“The observed of all observers?”

If by thinking too meanly of ourselves, we are overwhelmed with humiliation in public, and tormented with dissatisfaction in private, it is clear that there is as much vanity and selfishness in this depreciation of our own character, as in the more exalted and comfortable inflation of conceit. The only difference is,—in one case we are piqued and wounded that we cannot be admired; in the other, we believe ourselves to be admired when we are not.

The suffering produced by this kind of vanity, is generally accompanied both with affectation and bashfulness; but we must not suppose, because a blush suffuses the countenance, and the outstretched hand is seen to tremble, that the individual who is

guilty of this breach of fashionable indifference, is necessarily free from vanity, or guiltless of a desire to be admired.

Those who have travelled much, and seen much of the world, are generally cured both of bashfulness and affectation, by one of these two causes,—either they have been so often in company without making any impression, that they have learned of how little importance it is to society in what manner they behave, or how they look; or they have learned a still more useful lesson, that the admiration of man, even in its fullest sense, goes but a little way towards satisfying the heart.

The affectation most frequently detected in the behavior of women, is that which arises from an inordinate desire of being agreeable. A certain degree of this desire is, unquestionably, of great service in preserving them from the moral degradation which I have before alluded to, as attaching to personal neglect—as indicating a low state of mind wherever it exists, and procuring a low degree of estimation for the individual who thus allows her negligence to gain the ascendancy over her good taste.

On the other hand, what may with propriety be called an *inordinate* desire to be admired, when it takes the place of higher motives and principles of action, is, perhaps, a more fertile source both of folly and of suffering than any other which operates upon the life and conduct of woman. As exhibited through the single medium of affectation, it is so varied in its character, and so unbounded in its sphere of operation, that to attempt to describe it in detail would require volumes, rather than pages; I shall therefore confine my remarks to that species of affectation which is the most prevalent in the present day.

As the peculiar kind of merit assumed by the hypocrite is, in some measure, a test of what is most popular and most approved in society, so the prevailing affectation of the day is an indication of the taste of the times—of the general tone of public feeling, and of the tendency of private habits. That which most recommends itself to the accept-

ance and adoption of the young ladies of the present day, is an affectation of refinement—not refinement of feeling as relates to the means possessed by every human being, of increasing pleasure and alleviating pain, in the circle of friends or relatives by which they are surrounded ; but refinement of *self*, so that the individual who has attained to this degree of elevation shall be exempt from all personal obligations, particularly such as would render her instrumental in the performance of social and domestic services among her fellow-creatures. Women who affect this kind of refinement, are extremely fastidious in all that relates to manual employment. They cannot *touch* the coarse material that supplies our bodily wants, or constitutes our personal comfort. They loathe the very mention of those culinary compounds, which, nevertheless, their fair lips condescend to admit ; and they shrink with horror from the vulgar notion that the old grandmother-du-ties of preparing a clean hearth, and a comfortable fireside, for a husband or a brother, could by any possibility devolve upon them.

For this kind of affectation, however, there is some excuse in our natural indolence ; and in the exemption it procures from personal exertion ; but when we see the absolute *pains* which some of the same individuals will take to make themselves appear dependent, useless, and wholly inadequate to self-preservation, we are startled with a new idea, and entirely at a loss to account for this phenomenon in human nature.

It is with difficulty I admit the belief that women are in reality the victims of all those foolish fears with which they profess to be annoyed, and with which they unquestionably are very successful in annoying others. It is with difficulty I admit this belief, because I see, and see with admiration, that some of the most delicate women, the most sensitively alive to impression, and the most susceptible both of pleasure and pain, can, when called upon by duty, and actuated by principle, set all these idle fears aside, and dare to do what man would almost shrink from. I cannot, therefore, divest myself of all suspicion, that

a little of this feminine timidity is sometimes assumed, and a great deal of it encouraged, for the sake of effect—for the sake of making it appear to society that the individual who acts this part is too refined to have ever been accustomed to the rough usages of common life.

I say this with all charity, and with much compassion for those whose bodily and mental conformation does *really* render them the victims of causeless fear ; and when we see such persons endeavoring to subdue their timidity, ashamed of it as a weakness, and especially solicitous for it not to interfere with the comfort or convenience of others, they justly claim, not only our sympathy, but our admiration. It is the *display* of terror that I would speak of in terms which can scarcely be too contemptuous ; the becoming start, the modulated shriek, the studied appeal for manly protection, and all that elaboration of feminine delicacy which it sometimes appears to be the business of a life to exhibit.

Besides this kind of affectation, I will mention another species, if possible, still more unaccountable in its nature and cause. It is the affectation of ignorance respecting common things. It is by no means unusual with young ladies to appear to plume themselves upon not knowing how any familiar or ordinary thing is made or done. They refuse to understand any thing about machinery, and bring into their conversation what they seem to regard as the most entertaining blunders, whenever conversation turns upon the occupations of the laboring classes. The same individuals seldom know the way to any place, are incapable of discovering whether their faces are turned to the north or the south ; and if you ask them, with any idea of receiving an answer, from what quarter the wind is blowing, you might as well expect them to tell you whether the tide is at that moment rising in Nootka Sound.

If any of these confessions of ignorance, when forced upon them, were attended with embarrassment or shame, they would claim our sisterly compassion ; and sorry should I be to make their blushes the subject of public

remark. But when we find this ignorance persisted in, made conspicuous on every possible occasion, and attended with

"Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,"

as if it were sure to meet with a favorable reception in society, we cannot withhold the exclamation of our patriot poet, that from our souls we "loathe all affectation."

It is evident that this helplessness, and this ignorance, where they are assumed, must be so for the purpose of attracting attention, claiming assistance, it may be, from the other sex, and establishing an unquestionable claim to refinement, by giving forth to society an idea of habits of exclusion from all vulgar or degrading association.

It is difficult to imagine a mode of life, or a combination of circumstances, less advantageous to the cultivation of such false notions of refinement, than those which are presented by the real situation of the women of England; and it is impossible not to look, with gloomy anticipations for the future welfare of our country, upon the increasing prevalence of these erroneous ideas of what is really excellent and admirable in the female character.

The view we have taken of the subjects at present under consideration, naturally leads us to that great root of more than half the folly and the misery existing among women—the *love of admiration*.

The extreme case of a woman totally indifferent to the good opinion of her fellow-creatures, would fail to recommend itself to our regard, inasmuch as it would argue a deficiency in her nature, of those feelings which have been given her as a means of happiness to herself and benefit to others. She would stand amid her fellow-creatures a lonely and isolated being, living and acting without reference to the existence of any other being; and if she escaped the thousand disappointments of those who act from opposite motives, she would be equally exempt from any claim upon their affection.

Such individuals, however, are so rare, that the consideration of their peculiarities would

be a fruitless waste of time and thought. It is to the opposite extreme of character that our attention must now be given. And here I would request the reader to bear in mind, that my remarks refer strictly to the love of *admiration*, not to the love of *approbation*, which I take to be a natural and lawful stimulus to all that is excellent in female conduct.

When we look upon human life with "critical inspection," we find that a vast proportion of the apparent motives acted upon before the world, are not the real motives by which the individual actors are influenced; and that this system of deception is often carried on unconsciously to them, because they are themselves betrayed by the deceitfulness of their own hearts. In no instance is this more strikingly the case than in our love of admiration. To gratify this desire, what suffering are we not willing to endure, what pains do we not take, what patience can we not exercise! and all under the most plausible pretences—pretences that impose upon others less effectually than ourselves, that we are acting upon higher and more praiseworthy principles. There is this difference, however, to be observed between acting from worthy and unworthy motives: when our endeavors are unsuccessful and our motives correct, we seldom give way to the fretfulness of disappointment; but when our endeavors are ineffectual, and we look back into our own hearts, and find them unsupported by any laudable object, our fretfulness is often exaggerated into bitterness and spleen.

Observation and experience have taught me to believe, that many of the secret sorrows of woman's life owe half their poignancy to the disappointment of not being able to obtain the degree of admiration which has been studiously sought. A popular and elegant writer has said—"How often do the wounds of our vanity form the secret of our pathos!" And to the situation, and the feelings of woman, this observation is more especially applicable. Still there is much to be said for woman in this respect. By the nature of her own feelings, as well as by the established rules of polished life, she is thrown,

as it were, upon the good-will of society. Unable to assert her own claims to protection, she must endeavor to ensure it by secondary means, and she knows that the protection of man is best ensured by recommending herself to his admiration.

Nor is this all. There is but a faint line of demarkation between admiration and love. Though essentially different in their nature, and not always called forth by the same individual, their outward aspect is still so much alike, and there is so frequent a transition made from the one to the other, that it requires more able reasoning than the generality of women are capable of, to know exactly when they are exciting admiration, and when they are inspiring love. There is, however, one infallible test by which the case may be decided, and I cannot too earnestly recommend to my countrywomen to apply it to themselves. If they are admired without being beloved, they may possibly be favorites in company abroad, but they will be no favorites at home—they may obtain the good-will of a mere acquaintance, but they will be solitary and neglected at their own fireside. If they are cultivating such habits as are calculated to make them really beloved, especially at home, they may retire from company in which they have been wholly overlooked, to find the warmest welcome of the domestic circle awaiting their return—they may not be able to create any perceptible sensation when they appear in public, but every familiar countenance around their social hearth will be lighted up with smiles when they appear.

With regard to the love of admiration, it is much to be regretted that all women who make this one of the chief objects of their lives, do not at the same time evince an equal solicitude to be admired for what is really praiseworthy. Were this the case, they would at least be employed in cultivating useful habits; and as the student who aims at obtaining a prize, even if he fails in that direct object, has obtained what is more desirable, in the power of application which he has made himself master of; so the woman who aims at moral excellence, if the

taste of society is too vitiated to receive with admiration the first impression her character is calculated to make, has yet acquired such habits as will prove an inestimable treasure throughout the whole of her after life.

We do not, however, see that this is the case so much as might be desired in modern society. There is an appearance among the women of the present day, of being too eager for an immediate tribute of admiration, to wait for the development of moral worth; and thus they cultivate those more shining accomplishments, which dazzle and delight for the moment, but leave no materials for agreeable reflection behind. Like the conductor of an exhibition of fireworks, they play off their splendid combinations of light and color; but the magazine is soon expended, and the scene closes with weariness, and vacuity, and the darkness of night.

What a waste of time, and means, and application, for such a result! What an expenditure of thought and feeling, to have produced this momentary display! Surely no philanthropist can behold unmoved the pitiful objects for which women, who court the incense of admiration, are spending their lives. Surely none of the patriot sons of Britain can look on, and see with indifference the sisters, the wives, the mothers, of our English homes, perpetually employed, even in a world of care and suffering, of anxiety and disappointment, in administering to the momentary gratification of the eye and the ear, while the heart is left unsatisfied, and the drooping soul uncheered.

The desire of being beloved is an ambition of a far more amiable and praiseworthy character. But who shall record the endless variety of suffering it entails upon woman? I will not believe of my sex, that it is the love of admiration only, which gives birth to all those rivalries and mortifications—that envy, and spleen, and bitterness, which mar the felicity of female companionship. It must be some deeper feeling; and I at least will give them credit for being wounded in a tenderer point than their vanity, before they can so far do violence to their gentler nature, as to

revenge upon each other the slights and the humiliations they receive.

Yes: it is to human calculation the most pardonable, and yet it is the most soul-besetting sin of woman, to be perpetually investing earthly objects with an interest too intense for her own happiness; and asking of some oracle she has herself established, for an answer to the language of her own heart. Let her seek as she may, the admiration and applause of the world, it never satisfies the craving of her soul. She must have something to come home to—a shelter even in the brightest sunshine—a bower in the fairest garden—a shrine within the richest temple. She cannot mingle with the stream of life, and float securely on, as *one* among the many. She will not even be exalted in *solitary* distinction. The world has no wealth to offer, that she would possess *alone*.

This is the true nature of woman; and the home she seeks is in the hearts of those who are bound to her by affection. She knows that her place in this home is not to be maintained without unceasing care; and hence the solicitude she bestows upon things of trifling moment. She knows also that in some instances she is liable to be supplanted; she feels, perhaps, that she is not worthy to monopolize so honorable a place; and hence her watchfulness and jealousy. It may be that she is "discarded thence," for human love is sometimes treacherous; and hence her wounded spirit, and the occasional outpouring of natural feeling, by which she brings upon herself the odium of bitterness and revenge.

Thus the darkest faults of woman may often be traced back to those peculiarities of her nature, which, under favoring circumstances, and with the Divine blessing, may constitute her highest recommendation, and surest source of happiness. How important is it, then, since to woman it is essential to be loved, that she should not expect to reap where she has never sown, and thus incur the most painful disappointment to which her suffering nature is liable!

With regard to the anxiety to be admired, then, I would propose that *approve* should be substituted for *admire*, and just so far as women seek the approval of their friends, under the guidance of religious truth, there is every reason to believe they will reap an abundant reward. With regard to the desire to be beloved, I can only repeat, that the women of England are peculiarly blessed in the means they possess of rendering themselves estimable in society; and the opportunities they enjoy of cultivating the kindest and happiest feelings of our nature. They have the homes of England in their keeping; and the hearts within those homes must necessarily be attracted or repelled by the light or the shade which their presence diffuses around them. They cannot complain that circumstances are against them in the attainment of moral worth. All the natural characteristics of their native country are in their favor. The happiness of the whole human family, and especially of man, supplies them with a never-failing motive. Nature and religion are both on their side—the one to prompt, the other to lure them on. They have the gratitude of their fellow-creatures awaiting their endeavors—and what is more, they have the gracious approval of their heavenly Father, as their encouragement and reward.

CHAPTER XII.

PUBLIC OPINION—PECUNIARY RESOURCES—INTEGRITY.

THE respect paid by women to public opinion, and to the conventional rules of society, might have been considered with some propriety under the head of love of admiration, did not the immediate connection of this subject with that of integrity, render it more suited to the present chapter.

To use a popular Germanism, it is but a *one-sided* view of the subject that we take, when we suppose that the hope of being admired is the strongest stimulus to the female

character in all cases where her conduct is referred to public opinion. The dread of being censured or condemned, exercises, I am inclined to think, a far more extensive influence over her habits and her feelings. Any deviation from the fashionable mode of dress, or from the established usages of polished life, present an appalling difficulty to a woman of ordinary mind, brought up under the tutelage of what is called the world. She cannot—positively cannot—dare not—will not do any thing that the world has pronounced unladylike. Nor, while she lives in the world, and mixes in polished society, is it at all desirable that she should deviate from such universally acknowledged rules, except where absolute duty leads her into a different line of conduct. I should be the last person to advise a woman to risk the consequences of such deviations, simply for the sake of being singular; because, I regard the assumption of singularity for its own sake, as one of the most absurd of all the varied specimens of affectation which human life affords.

To *choose* to be singular without a sufficient reason, and to *dare* to be so in a noble cause, are so widely different, that I desire to be clearly understood in the remarks I am about to make, as referring strictly to those cases in which duty renders it necessary for women to deviate from the fashions and established customs of the time or place in which they live.

While the tide of prosperity bears us smoothly on, and our means are ample, and our luxuries abundant, we suffer little inconvenience from the tyranny of the world in these respects. Indeed, it is rather an agreeable amusement to many ladies to consult the fashions of the day, and to be among the first to change their mode of dress—to order costly furniture, and to receive company in the most approved and lady-like style. But as I have before observed, of the class of persons to which this work chiefly relates, the tide of prosperity is apt to ebb, as well as to flow; and as it recedes from us the whole aspect of the world is not only changed to us, but the aspect of our conduct is changed to

the world; so that, what it approved in us before, and honored with its countenance, is now the subject of its extreme and bitter condemnation.

It is then that we discover, we have been serving a hard master; but unfortunately for thousands of human beings, the discovery brings with it no freedom from that service. We loathe the cruel bondage; but habit is too strong for conviction, and we continue to wear the galling chain. It is, then, in cases of adverse fortune, that we see the incalculable benefit of having made the moral duties of social and domestic life the rule of our conduct, and of having regarded all outward embellishments as things of very subordinate importance.

It is a case of by no means rare occurrence, that the young women of England return home from school more learned in the modes of dress, and habits of conduct prevailing among the fashionable and the wealthy, than in any of those systems of intellectual culture in which they have been instructed. Or, if their knowledge has not extended to what is done in fashionable life, they have at least learned to despise what is done among the vulgar and the poor, to look upon certain kinds of dress as impossible to be worn, and to regard with supreme contempt every indication of the absence of fashionable manners. So far as their means of information could be made to extend, they have laid down, for the guidance of their future lives, the exact rules by which the outward conduct of a *lady* ought to be regulated, and by these rules they determine to abide.

If this determination was applied exclusively to what is delicate, refined, and lovely in the female character, they would unquestionably be preparing themselves for being both esteemed and beloved; but unfortunately for them, their attention is too often directed to the mode of dress worn by persons much higher than themselves in worldly prosperity, and to all the minutiae of look and manner, which they regard as indications of easy circumstances and exemption from vulgar occupation.

Nor is the school itself, or the mode of treatment there, to be regarded as the source of these ideas and conclusions. The customs of modern society and the taste of modern times are solely in fault. And wherever young ladies are congregated together with the same means of communication as at school, the same results must follow, until the public taste undergoes a material change, or until the women of England have become learned in a higher school of wisdom.

With the preparation here alluded to, our young women enter upon social life; and as years roll on, the habits thus acquired of making custom and fashion the rule of their lives, strengthen with the establishment of their character, and become as parts of their very being. What then is the consequence of such habits in the day of their adversity, when the diminution of their pecuniary means leaves them no longer the power of conforming to the world they have so loved? The consequence is, that along with many real privations, their ideal sufferings are increased a hundred-fold by the fact that they must dress and live in a manner different from what they have been accustomed to—in short, that they must lose *caste*.

How little has the mere circumstance of relinquishing our luxuries to do with the distress attendant upon the loss of worldly substance! We find every day that persons travelling expressly for enjoyment, joining in social excursions and even seeking the invigoration of their health, and the refreshment of their spirits, from the sea-breezes, or in places of customary resort for the summer months, voluntarily resign more than half their habitual indulgences, and subject themselves, without a murmur, to the occupation of apartments which they would scarcely think possible to be endured for a single day in their native town; and all the while they are perhaps more happy and more cheerful than in their elegant drawing-rooms at home.

It is evident, then, that it cannot be their individual share in the gratification of artificial wants, which they find it so heart-breaking to resign. It must be that a certain num-

ber of polite and refined individuals having combined to attach a high degree of importance to the *means of procuring* the luxuries of life, all who belong to this class, when compelled to exhibit in public a manifest destitution of such means, regard themselves, and expect to be regarded by others, as having become degraded in the sight of their fellow-creatures, and no longer entitled to their favor or regard.

It is of no use asserting that we all know better than to come to this conclusion—that mankind are not so weak, or so unjust—that we appreciate the moral worth of an individual beyond the luxuries of his table, or the costliness of his dress. It is easy to *say* this; but it is not so easy to believe it, because the practical proof of experience is against it. If, for instance, we cared for none of these things, why should the aspect of human life present such a waste of time, and health, and patience, and mental power, and domestic peace, in the pursuit of wealth, when that wealth is expended, as soon as gained, in maintaining an appearance of elegance and luxury before the world?

I am not prepared to argue about the benefits resulting from the encouragement of artificial wants, and the increase of luxuries, on the broad scale of national prosperity. There are pens more able and more fit for such a purpose. My narrower views are confined to the individual evils resulting from an overstrained ambition to keep pace with our wealthier associates in our general habits; and I would write with earnestness on this subject, because I believe that in England, at the present time, these evils are of rapidly increasing extent.

It may seem unimportant to those who have no experience in these affairs, to speak of the private and domestic disputes arising out of artificial wants, on one side, and inability to provide the demanded supply for them, on the other. Yet what family, in moderate circumstances, has not some record of scenes, alike humiliating to human nature, and destructive to human happiness, in which the ill-judged request, or the harsh denial—

the importunate appeal, or the agonizing reply—the fretful remonstrance, or the bitter retort, have not at seasons cast a shade over the domestic hearth, and destroyed the peace of the circle gathered around the social board.

It may appear still more like trifling, to speak of the sensations, with which a member of a fallen family regards her dilapidated wardrobe, and looks, and looks in vain for a garment sufficiently respectable to make her appearance in before a rich relation. Perhaps she has but one—a call has to be made upon a person of distinction, and as she proceeds on her way, eyeing with watchful anxiety every speck and spray that would be likely to reduce her garment below the average of respectability, a storm overtakes her. There are carriages for all who can afford to pay for them, but none for her: and the agony of losing her last claim to gentility takes possession of her soul.

The reader may possibly smile at the absurdity of this case. A half-clad savage from some barbarous island, would probably smile, could he be made to understand it. But nothing can be further from exciting a smile than the *real* sensations it occasions. Nothing can be further from a smile, than the look with which a failing tradesman regards the forlorn condition of his hat, when he dares not brush it, lest he should render its destitution more apparent. Nothing can be further from a smile, than the glance he casts upon his threadbare coat, when he knows of no possible resource in art or nature that can supply him with a new one. And nothing can be further from a smile, than the cold welcome we give to a guest who presents himself unexpectedly, and must, perforce, look in upon the scantiness of our half-furnished table.

It is easy to class these sources of disquietude under the head of absurdities, and to call them unworthy of rational beings; but I do believe, there is more real misery existing in the world at the present time, from causes like these, than from all those publicly acknowledged calamities which are more uniformly attributed to the dispensations of Providence.

I do not mean that these miseries arise directly from, or are by any means confined to, our personal appearance, or the furniture of our houses; but when we contemplate the failure of pecuniary means, as it is regarded by the world, and attempt to calculate the immense variety of channels through which the suffering it produces is made to flow, in consequence of the customs and habits of society, I believe they will be found to extend through every variety of human life, to the utmost range of human feeling. Is it not to escape this suffering that the man of unsound principles too frequently applies himself to dishonorable means—that the suicide prepares the deadly draught—and that the emigrant sometimes forsakes his native land, and consigns himself to the solitude of unpeopled wilds?—In short, what more remains within the range of human capability, which man has not done, with the hope of flying from the horrors attendant upon the falling away of his pecuniary means?

When the *reality* of this suffering is acknowledged, as it must be by all who look upon society as it exists at the present moment; the next subject of importance is, to consider how the suffering can be obviated, and its fatal effects upon the peace and happiness of society prevented.

The most immediate means that could be made to operate upon woman would unquestionably be by implanting in her mind a deeper and more rational foundation of thought and feeling—to put a stop to that endless variety of ill-natured gossip which relates to the want of elegance, or fashionable air in certain persons' dress and manner of living; so that there should be no questioning, "What will be thought of my wearing this dress again?" "What will Miss P., or Mrs. W. say, if they see our old curtains?" "What can the Johnsons mean by travelling outside?" "What will the people at church or chapel say, when they see your shabby veil?" "I positively don't believe the Wilsons can afford a new carpet, or they would surely have one; and they have discontinued their subscription to our book-society."

It is neither grateful nor profitable to pursue these remarks any further than as they serve for specimens of that most contemptible of small-talk, which yet exercises a powerful influence over the female mind—so much so, that I have known the whole fabric of a woman's philosophy entirely overthrown, and her peace of mind for the moment destroyed, by the simple question, whether she had no other dress than the one she was so often seen to wear.

There is another instance that occurs to me as illustrating, in a striking manner, the subject immediately under consideration: it is that of wearing mourning for a deceased relative. This custom is so generally acknowledged as desirable, that it needs no recommendation from my pen. One would suppose, however, on a superficial view of it, that the wearing of black, as a general costume indicative of the absence of festivity or merriment from the bereaved family, was all that had been originally intended by this custom; and that it should thus become an outward testimony of respect and sorrow for the dead.

The fashion of the world, however, has imposed upon this custom, as applies to females, certain restrictions, and additions so expensive in their nature as to render it rather an article of luxury to wear genteel mourning, or that which is indicative of the deepest grief. It interferes but little with the sorrow and seclusion of a recent bereavement, for the mistress of ample means to *give orders* for an external exemplification of precisely the degree of sorrow supposed to attend upon the loss of a parent, or a distant relative. But when the means of pecuniary expenditure are extremely small, and the materials for appearing properly in public have to be made up at home, and prepared for use within a very limited time, it is evident that greater regard to the sacredness of sorrow would suggest the desirableness of a less elaborate style of dress, or perhaps a dress not absolutely new for the occasion. Ladies, however, and those who have been accustomed to make gentility the primary rule of their conduct, must *mourn genteelly*; and, conse-

quently, there are often scenes of bustling preparation, of invention, and studious arrangement—scenes, upon which, if a stranger should look in, he would see an appearance of activity, and interest, almost amounting to *amusement*, in the very house where the shutters are still closed; and which are wholly at variance with the silence and the sanctity of a deep and solemn grief.

Nor is this all. So extremely becoming and lady-like is the fashionable style of mourning, that, under the plea of paying greater respect to the memory of the dead, it has become an object of ambition to wear it in its greatest excellence; and equally an object of dread, and source of humiliation, to be compelled to wear it in an inferior style. Thus, when the loss of a father is attended with the failure of his pecuniary resources, it adds no little to the grief into which his daughters are plunged, to be under the necessity of appearing so soon after their twofold loss, under such an outward sign of poverty as is generally understood by the world to be betrayed by cheap and humble mourning.

It is evident that if the preparation of mourning had never been reduced to a system—so many folds of crape for a parent—so many for a sister, and so on—the peculiar style in which it might be made up would never have obtained half its present importance, and respectable women, of fallen fortunes, might then have appeared in public with the credit of paying as much honor to the memory of the dead, as the more wealthy; nay, they might even have been so absorbed in their heart-rending loss, and in all the solemn and affecting impressions it was calculated to inspire, as to forget to have any new preparation for the occasion, and might, without loss of respectability, appear again in those accustomed habiliments of darkness and gloom which former instances of family affliction and bereavement had been the means of bringing into use.

I mention the instance of mourning, not because it differs materially from many others, but because it appears to me to illustrate clearly and strikingly the degree of shame, and trouble, and perplexity, in which women

are involved by the habit of attaching too much importance to the usages of society. I know that it is beneficial to the character and the morals of women, that their good name should be guarded from every breath of reproach ; and that the wholesome restrictions of society are absolutely necessary to prevent them from sometimes venturing too far under the influence of generous and disinterested feeling. But my remarks apply exclusively to cases where their moral worth would be established, not endangered ; and I would earnestly request my countrywomen to bear in mind the immense difference between deviating from the rules of fashion, and breaking through the wholesome restrictions of prudence.

I have spoken in strong terms of the sufferings and inconveniences incident to women, from their slavery to the opinion of the world ; but were this consideration all that had to be taken into account, they would unquestionably have a right to adjust the balance, and act according to their own choice.

There is, however, a far more important question connected with this subject—and that is, the question of *integrity*.

If there be one moral quality for which England as a nation is distinguished above all others, I should say it was her integrity : integrity in her intercourse with other nations ; integrity in the administration of her government and laws ; integrity in the sound hearts and honorable feelings of her patriotic sons.

And shall her daughters be less solicitous to uphold this high standard of moral worth ? They answer " No ! " But they are perhaps not all aware of the encroaching and insidious nature of artificial wants, and tastes, and habits, founded upon the fashion of the times rather than upon any lasting principle of right. They are not all aware, that to dress and live beyond their means, is a species of public robbery ; and that even if every lawful debt is paid, and the balance struck without injury to character or credit, there are still the poor, the starving, hungry, helpless poor, unsatisfied with bread. They have

therefore the strong claims both of justice and benevolence to fulfil, before the integrity of their Christian character can be complete.

With regard to general benevolence, and charity to the poor, we are apt to deceive ourselves to an extent which would be beyond our belief, were we not convinced by the observation of every day, that few, very few of those even in the middle ranks of life—few even of those tender-hearted females who are so painfully affected by every exhibition of human misery—do any thing at all commensurate with their means, towards alleviating the suffering which is to be found among the poor.

I am not inclined to attach any high degree of merit to the mere act of giving money to the poor, because I esteem it a luxury to be thus instrumental in relieving their pressing difficulties ; and I am also in considerable doubt whether this is the best method of relieving them. The point I am about to remark upon, however, is the extreme inconsistency of those longings, so prevalent among ladies, that they *could* give to the poor, and the lamentations they frequently utter relating to the absolute necessity they are under of not giving more. We find them elegantly dressed, dwelling among costly furniture, and denying themselves nothing which their wealthier neighbors enjoy ; and all the while they do so wish they could give more to the poor !

I confess it sickens the heart, and wearies the mind, to listen to absurdities like this. If these individuals would but let the matter rest, and be content to be fashionable without *pretending* to be generous, half their culpability would cease to exist. But they go on to explain to you how their station in life, and their credit in society, require them to dress and live in a certain way, and how they consider themselves doing a benefit to their country by their encouragement of its manufactures. It would not be inappropriate to ask them, as they enter a fashionable and expensive establishment to purchase some costly articles of dress, whether they are doing it in reality for the benefit of their country ?

and there might be seasons when it would be equally appropriate to inquire, whether they prefer their appearance before the world, to the spiritual consolation of having made the injunctions of their blessed Saviour the rule of their conduct.

The measure of charity which it is our duty to bestow upon the poor, is a point of very difficult adjustment, as well as the manner we may choose to adopt in the distribution of our means. We cannot properly make ourselves the judge of a brother or a sister, in these respects. But if we have sufficient resources for the purchase of luxuries, it is in vain to pretend that we *cannot* give to the poor; and if we will not spare a little out of our little, we cannot expect to be believed when we boast of the pleasure it would afford us to be charitable with more.

There are noble instances afforded by women in the middle classes of society in England, of what can really be done in the way of benevolence, in a persevering and unobtrusive manner, which it is truly refreshing to the soul to contemplate. And I would earnestly recommend my young countrywomen to look diligently to these, and to ask whether they cannot go and do likewise, rather than to accustom themselves to the dangerous habit of inquiring whether they cannot afford to purchase what is fashionable and becoming to a lady, even when it is not necessary for comfort or respectability. By this means they would at least be able to attain a *degree* of merit; for if they did not go to the extent of the truly devoted and praiseworthy, they might avoid involving themselves in that interminable chain of expensive contingencies, which are sure to follow, if we set out in life by making it our first object of ambition to stand well with the world, and to accommodate our dress and mode of living to that which is most admired in society.

The fallacious mode of reasoning induced by too slavish a conformity to the fashions and the customs of the world, creates an endless series of entanglements most fatally seductive to woman's better feelings. The

fact of having, or not having, absolute debts unpaid, seems to be, with most young ladies, the boundary-line of their morality, as relates to their pecuniary affairs; and well would it be if *all* were strictly scrupulous even to this extent. Within this line, however, there may be deviations from the integrity of a noble, generous, and enlightened mind, which yet the world takes no cognizance of, and which do not materially affect the character, as it is judged of by society in general.

I have said that the world is an unjust judge, and in no instance is it more so than in this. The world pays homage to an expensive, elegant, and lady-like appearance,—but it takes little note of the principle that would condemn this appearance, if it could not be maintained without encroachment upon a parent's limited means. The restrictions of civil law refer only to the payment of pecuniary debts; and when these are discharged, we may appear without reproach before society. But happily for us, we have a higher standard of moral duty; and the integrity of the Christian character requires a strict observance of points of conduct unseen by society, and perhaps known only to ourselves, and to the great Searcher of human hearts, by whose judgment we must stand or fall.

Reasoning, then, upon these subjects, from higher principles, we clearly perceive that we have no right to indulge ourselves with luxuries, or to purchase the countenance and favor of society, at the expense of a parent's peace, or by the sacrifice of the comforts of his old age. We have no right to encroach upon means not strictly and lawfully our own, even though they should be granted to our necessities, for more than belongs to actual decency of appearance, and sufficiency of subsistence, except in those cases where it is the desire of wealthy friends or relatives that we should be adorned and supplied at their expense. We have no right, and no woman of good feeling would wish to establish a right, to dress and live at the extreme of expenditure which a father, by nothing less than hourly and incessant toil, can obtain the

means of affording. We have no right to make presents, and thus obtain the meed of gratitude and admiration for our generosity, with money which is immediately transmitted from our father's hand for that especial purpose, while our own resources remain undiminished, our own private store of treasures undivided, and our circumstances wholly unaffected.

I do not say that to each one of the immense variety of daily and familiar actions, which might be classed under this head, there attaches the highest degree of actual culpability. They are rather instances of encroachment, than of absolute injustice and wrong. But I do say that the *habit* of encroaching, just so far as decency will permit, and as occasion seems to warrant, upon all that is noble and generous, upright and kind, in human conduct, has a fatal tendency to corrupt the heart, while it produces at the same time a deadening effect upon the highest and holiest aspirations of the soul.

What answer can be made by such a soul to the secret questionings of its internal monitor? Or how shall we appeal to the gracious and merciful Creator of the universe, who has given us all this glorious world for our enjoyment, and all the elements of nature for our use; who has looked upon us in our degradation, and pitied our infirmities, and opened the gates of heaven, that his mercy might descend to us in a palpable and human form, and that we might receive the conditions of his offered pardon, be healed, and live?—how shall we appeal to him in our private prayers, or stand before him in the public sanctuary, with this confession on our lips—that just so far as man could approve or condemn our actions, we have deemed it expedient to be just; but that to him, and to the Saviour of our souls, we have grudged the incense of a willing mind; and therefore we have enhanced our pleasures, and gratified our pride, and fed our selfishness, by all those trifling, yet forbidden means, which he has pronounced to be offensive in his sight?

Besides these considerations, there is one

of immeasurable importance, connected with our conduct in the sight of God. No human mind can set a bound, or prescribe a measure, to its voluntary deviations from the line of duty. We have been supposing a case in which these deviations are extremely minute, and yet so numerous as to form as it were a circle round the heart—a circle of evil. Imagine, then, this circle widening, and widening, year after year, through the seasons of youth and maturity, and the dreary winter of old age. What an awful and melancholy spectacle does the state of that heart present, enclosed as it were in a deleterious atmosphere, and growing perpetually colder and more callous by exclusion from the blessed light of heaven!

Oh! let us not *begin* to breathe this deadly atmosphere! And you who are yet inexperienced in the ways of human life, whose habits are not formed, whose paths not chosen, whose line of conduct not decided, what a blessing would it be to you, both in this world and in the world to come, were you to choose that *better part*, that would enable you to look with a single eye to what is most acceptable in the Divine sight, and most in accordance with the will of God; leaving the embellishments of person, the luxuries of taste, and the appropriation of worldly esteem, to be enjoyed or relinquished with a grateful and contented mind, just as your heavenly Father may permit; and bearing always about with you, as a talisman against the encroachments of evil, even in the most simple or most specious form, the remembrance that none of these things are worthy of a single wish, if they must necessarily be obtained by the violation of his laws, or accompanied by the tokens of his displeasure!

CHAPTER XIII.

HABITS AND CHARACTER—INTELLECTUAL ATTAINMENTS—EMPLOYMENT OF TIME—MORAL COURAGE—RIGHT BALANCE OF MIND.

To those gentle readers who have been kind enough to accompany me through the

pages, and who feel inclined to ex-
 their forbearance towards me through-
 ore, I feel that some apology, or
 me explanation, is necessary for the
 in which I have so often been com-
 speak of the extraordinary ambition
 ed by my countrywomen, in the
 lay, to make themselves mistress of
 sible variety of intellectual attain-
 at can be acquired at school; and I
 elp fearing that many of my remarks
 ear to have been written with a view
 ciate the value of these treasures of
 id, as far as my single influence may
 o deter others from the pursuit of

from this, I would repeat, if possi-
 ords which could not be forgotten,
 conviction that no human being can
 much, so that their sphere of intel-
 does not extend to what is evil. But,
 e accumulation of a vast store of
 ge is one of the objects we have in
 the culture of the mind, we must not
 at it is by no means the *only* one.
 ing an infant, we not only supply its
 with food, but also find it necessary
 it the habit, and assist it in the pow-
 ercising its limbs; we guide its steps,
 far as we are able, give it just notions
 sing its bodily functions with the best

ed the mind, then, is but a small part
 uty. If we leave it helpless and in-
 out ability to exercise its various
 and judgment to exercise them
 he most important portion of that
 neglected. Thus far, I believe, all
 employed in teaching the young will
 ; with me, for their experience must
 rong evidence in favor of this state-
 There are some points, however, in
 t appears to me, they have allowed
 ion of the times to render their sys-
 truction extremely defective. But,
 I am by no means prepared to say
 y are in any degree to blame; be-
 ey have the taste of the times to con-
 d they would obtain little credit for

making our young women what they ought
 to be, if that taste was not correct.

With regard to moral discipline, or that
 mode of instruction by which women would
 be fitted for their domestic and social duties,
 I have expressed my opinion in an earlier
 chapter of this work, and, with regard to in-
 tellectual culture, I hope to be pardoned if I
 now venture a few remarks.

It appears to me, in looking abroad upon
 society, and contemplating the immense va-
 riety of mental attainments which prevail
 among the young women of the present day,
 that they are in imminent danger of suppos-
 ing, when they have acquired a vast amount
 of verbal knowledge, that the great work of
 education is done. They are, in short, in
 danger of mistaking the means for the end;
 and of resting satisfied that they are wiser
 than the generation before them.

In the acquirement of languages this is
 particularly the case. A young lady obtains
 the reputation of being clever, when she has
 made herself mistress of several languages;
 and with this she is generally satisfied; while
 she ought to remember that she has but
 gained possession, as it were, of the *keys* of
 vast storehouses of knowledge, for the use of
 which she is responsible to society.

Again, in the pursuit of science, there is a
 technicality that strikes the ear, and gives an
 idea of vast superiority in the way of attain-
 ments; and there are facts that may be im-
 pressed upon the memory, without the mind
 being in any way enlarged or enlightened by
 the reception of them. It is easy, for in-
 stance, to talk of botany, without the thoughts
 at any time extending themselves to the gen-
 eral economy of vegetation; and of astron-
 omy, so as to tell the distances of different
 planets, without the soul being penetrated by
 one ray of illumination from the wisdom
 which designed, and which controls the star-
 ry heavens. It is easy to attend a few scien-
 tific lectures, and to return home talking of
 the names of gases, and of some of the most
 striking phenomena of electricity, the gal-
 vanic battery, and other popular exhibitions
 of the lecture-room; but it requires a totally

different process of mind to take a general survey of the laws of the universe, and to bow before the conviction that all must have been created by a hand divine.

From our observations of rural or romantic scenery, it is easy to babble about woods and waterfalls, about the ruggedness of mountains, and the grandeur of the raging sea; but it does not follow as a necessary consequence that we have formed any conception of the idea of abstract beauty, or of the reverential, but admiring awe, which true sublimity is calculated to inspire. It does not follow that we shall have learned to imbue in the elements of nature those subtler essences of spirit and of mind, which, to the poetical and imaginative, people every desert, and render vocal with melody the silence of night.

It may be said, that in this busy world there is little employment for the imagination—little scope for the exercise of poetical associations. I grant—for I am compelled to do so—that poetry should be elbowed out of our working world to make room for machinery; but I see no reason why the same train of thought, and course of reasoning, should not be carried on. I grant that the materials are different; but why should we not still endeavor to raise an altar in our minds for a higher, holier worship than that of the mammon of this world? Why should we fix our attention solely upon the material part of the universe, satisfying ourselves with the names of substantial things, with their variety, classification, and physical properties? Why should we confine ourselves to counting the pillars in the temple of nature, computing its magnitude and measuring its height, without referring all our calculations, through the highest range of imagination, to the wonder-working power of the great Artificer?

It may be said that we dwell too much in cities, and lead too artificial a life, to be able to perceive the instrumentality of Divine Wisdom in all the events that pass beneath our observation. If this be the case, there is the more need that we should rouse our-

selves by fresh efforts, to penetrate beyond the polished surface of the world in which we live, into the deeper mysteries that lie beyond—there is the more need that we should endeavor to perceive, in the practical affairs of busy life, those great principles by which the laws of nature are governed, and the system of the universe upheld.

If, for instance, we live in the heart of a thickly-peopled city, with the rush of its busy multitudes around us, and the labor of man's hand, and the efforts of his ingenuity, perpetually before our eyes, there is no reason why we should look only at the splendor of its manufactured articles, amuse our fancy with the outward aspect of its varied exhibitions of art, or regard with disgust the occupations of the mechanic, because he handles the raw material, and touches what is gross. Would it not be more consistent with the exercise of an enlightened mind, to contemplate the wonders of that power which the Creator has intrusted to the use of man, so that he lays hold, as it were, of the elements of nature, and makes them submit to his will? Night falls not with stillness and repose upon the city; but we walk as through a living blaze: and shall we pass on, like children, pleased with the glitter and the show, without reflecting that man has been able to convert the darkest substance from the bowels of the earth into the very source of all this light! Mountains and valleys, tracts of land and floods of water, intervene between us and our distant friends; but we fly to them with a rapidity which, a few years ago, would have been pronounced, even by philosophers, impossible. And shall we move like senseless matter, even through the very heart of the mountain, calculating only the speed at which we travel, without awaking to the momentous fact, that by the ingenuity of man, mere vapor, proverbial as it is for its weakness, emptiness, and nothingness in the creation, has been converted into the master-power by which the mighty operations of men are carried on? We take our daily walks through the bustling city, and gaze at the splendid exhibitions of taste, and learn the names of

those who are most skilled in music and painting, and all the sister arts; and we speak in the cant terms that are most in vogue, and think we display superiority of mind and intelligence to use them well; but should we not at the same time cultivate the habit of bearing in remembrance the unchanging principles of beauty, and of referring back to them whatever is offered to our admiration in the form of art?

We speak of the degrading cares and sordid views that occupy the working world; but how have we endeavored to pass beyond these, and to connect them with the world of thought? We hear of the vast amount of labor carried on, and the relative expenses incurred, and the different things that can be made and done within a given time: but why should we not sometimes make a transition of thought from the material, to the means of working it—from the means, to the power—and from the power that is imparted, to the Creator who imparts. To-day the mechanic plies his busy tools. To-morrow his hand may have become rigid and motionless beneath the stroke of death. Thousands and tens of thousands pass away from the scene of their labors, but the labor still goes on; for the laws of nature change not, and the principles upon which the labor of man is carried into effect, remain the same.

We are too apt, because we mingle in populous and busy scenes, and feel the necessity of moving with the tide, to forget that what we see and hear, what is obvious to the senses and palpable to the touch, is not all that we live for, or even all that we live amongst. We should endeavor to find breathing-times even amidst the hurry and the rush of present things. We should sometimes pause among the multitude, and listen mentally, to the beating of the mighty pulse of a tumultuous city, and ask, whether the Creator and Sustainer of this living mass is not beholding the operation of the various powers he has set in motion, marking its defects, supplying its deficiencies, and sustaining the stupendous whole. We should then be enabled to perceive something of the

working of the inner plan, how one class of human beings depends upon another—how the principles of justice establish checks and counter-checks, so that no single power shall be predominant; how poverty and riches alternate, and how the vices of the bad are made to call forth the virtues of the good; and by renewing our conviction that God is indeed here, as well as present to the more peaceful and harmonious portions of his creation, we should renew our faith, and enjoy perpetual refreshment for our souls.

What we most want in education, then, is to invest material things with the attributes of mind; and we want this more and more, as commerce, and arts and manufactures increase in importance and extent. We want it more and more to give interest to our familiar and necessary occupations; and we want it especially, that we may assist in redeeming the character of English *men* from the mere animal, or rather, the mere mechanical state, into which, from the nature and urgency of their occupations, they are in danger of falling.

We want it also for ourselves; for a time seems to be approaching, when the middle class of society in England will have to be subdivided; and when the lower portion of this class will of necessity have to turn their attention to a different style of living, and to different modes of occupation, thought, and feeling. At present all this class are educated nearly upon the same plan. The happiness of society, and our moral necessities, will surely, before long, suggest the importance of females of this class being fitted for something very different from drawing-room exhibitions.

All that I have written in this volume, imperfect as it is, has been stimulated by a desire to increase the moral worth of my countrywomen, and enhance the domestic happiness of my native land. In order that this should be done effectually, it seems to me indispensably necessary, that women, whose parents are possessed of slender means, or engaged in business, and who can with extreme difficulty accomplish even so much as what is called "making their way,"—that

women in this class should be educated, not simply for ladies, but for useful and active members of society—and for this purpose, that they also should consider it no degradation to render their activity conducive to the purposes of trade.

It is a curious anomaly in the structure of modern society, that gentlemen may employ their hours of business in almost any degrading occupation, and if they have but the means of supporting a respectable establishment at home, may be gentlemen still; while, if a lady does but touch any article, no matter how delicate, in the way of trade, she loses caste, and ceases to be a lady.

I say this with all possible respect for those who have the good sense and the moral courage to employ themselves in the business of their fathers and their husbands, rather than to remain idle and dependent; because I know that many of them *are* ladies in the best acceptation of the word—ladies in the delicacy and propriety of their feelings, and more than ladies in the noble dignity of their general conduct. Still I doubt not they have had their difficulties to encounter from the influence of public opinion, and that their generous feelings have been often wounded by the vulgar prejudices prevailing in society against their mode of life.

With the improvements of art, and the increase of manufactures, there must be an increased demand for mechanics and work-people of every description; and supposing English society to be divided, as it soon must be, into four classes, there surely can be no reason why the second class of females should not be so trained as to partake in the advantages resulting from this extended sphere of active and useful occupation.

The only field at present open for what is considered lady-like employment, is that of educating the young; and hence the number of accomplished young women, too refined for common usefulness, whose claims to public attention as governesses tend so much to reduce the value of their services in that important sphere.

There are however, many descriptions of

occupation connected with business in its varied forms, which are by no means polluting to the touch, or degrading to the mind; and it would be an unspeakable advantage to hundreds of young females, if, instead of useless accomplishments, they could be instructed in these. In addition to all kinds of fancy millinery, the entire monopoly of which they might surely be permitted to enjoy, I would point out especially to their attention, the art of drawing patterns for the muslin and calico printers, an occupation which appears peculiarly adapted to the female taste, and which might be carried on without the least encroachment upon the seclusion of domestic life, and the delicacy of the female character. I have been led to understand that this branch of business is almost exclusively carried on by men; and I cannot but regret, that an employment, which offers a tempting luxury to those who suffer from the combined evils of idleness and scanty means, should not also be rendered productive of pecuniary benefit to women.

It seems, however, to be from this pecuniary benefit that they shrink; for when we observe the nature of their daily occupations, their common stitchery, their worsted work, their copied music, their ingeniously-invented articles for bazaars, it would be difficult to say in what sense they are more agreeable, or more dignified, than many branches of art connected with trade. It must, therefore, be the fact of receiving money for what they do, which renders the latter so objectionable; and it is a strange paradox in our daily experience, that this money should all the while be the very thing of which they are most in want.

The degradation of what is vulgarly called *making their own living*, is, I believe, the obstacle of paramount difficulty; and therefore it is to reduce this difficulty, and to render it more easily surmountable, that our solicitude for the well-being of society, with all our influence, and all our talent, ought to be employed.

It is in vain to argue in such cases, that individuals have no right to think and feel as

they do—that women *ought* to be wiser than to consider themselves degraded by working for their own subsistence; while such is the constitution of society, and such the early bias of the female mind, that it is almost impossible they should do otherwise. The great point to be gained, is to penetrate at once to the root of the matter, and to begin by a different system of education, to render moral courage—the courage to do what is right—the first principle of female conduct.

What a world of misery this single principle of action, thoroughly grafted into the character, would spare the sons and daughters of men!

I am inclined to think the foundation of moral courage must be laid in very early life, so as to render it effectual in bearing us up under the trials of maturer age; and it is not only to elevate the general character of my countrywomen, but to spare them at least half the sufferings they now endure, that I would most earnestly recommend them, in cultivating the mind, to cultivate also the inestimable power of exercising moral courage, whenever the claims of duty are set in opposition to the opinions of the world.

For want of moral courage, how many misunderstandings do we leave unsettled among our friends, until

“The lightly uttered, careless word,”

the thoughtless action, or the false report, are allowed to poison the very springs of affection, and to separate the dearest friends! For want of moral courage, how often, and how fatally, do we fail in the sacred duty of reproving what we see amiss, until the evil grows and magnifies, and extends itself, and becomes so obvious to general perception, that we scruple not to join in its condemnation, forgetting that our own want of faithfulness may possibly be chargeable with its existence!

For want of moral courage, how do we sink, and see others sinking every day, under the pressure of those pecuniary difficulties which I have already described, until we are guilty of almost every species of paltry

meanness, to support an appearance of respectability before the world, forgetting that the grand foundation of all respectability of character, is an honorable, independent, and upright mind! For want of moral courage, how often do we stoop and cringe, and submit to contumely, and eat the bread of humiliation, and wear the rich garments that ought to cover us with shame, because we are despicable enough to live upon what is not lawfully our own, and what is often granted without good-will, and received without satisfaction!

Oh! that the women of England would rouse themselves with one accord, to break these galling chains!—to exemplify in their own conduct, and to teach their daughters, that there is no earthly enjoyment, no personal embellishment, no selfish gratification, worth the sacrifice of just and honorable feeling—that the humblest occupation, undertaken from a sense of duty, becomes ennobled in the motive by which it is prompted, and that the severest self-denial may be blessed and honored by the Father of mercies, if endured in preference to an infringement upon those laws which he has laid down for the government of the human family.

There is another point of view, in which it appears to me that the present character of the women of England is extremely defective. It is as regards a right balance of mind; or, in other words, a just estimate of the relative importance of things in general.

From the natural construction of the mind of woman, from the quickness of her perceptions, and the intensity of her momentary feelings, she is apt to lay hold of every thing calculated immediately to strike her fancy, or to excite her emotions, with an earnestness that excludes the possibility of her mind being kept alive to other impressions, even more essential to her happiness, and more important in themselves.

Hence, we find in society, that women too frequently invest the affairs of the moment, the circumstances occurring around them, and their own personal experience, with a

degree of interest wholly incomprehensible to strangers, and often utterly contemptible to men. I do not—I will not believe—that women are inferior to what is called the noble sex, in the moral world; but I do believe that from this very cause arises more than half the contumely bestowed upon their *littleness* of character. It is not that they want capacity or understanding to judge of many things as well as men. It is that they are so occupied with what is obvious on the surface of things, that they will not look beyond; and hence their unceasing propensity to trifle, and to render themselves apparently inferior to what they really are.

This is the great leading defect in woman's character; and it is the more to be regretted, that it presents to her mind innumerable sources of disquietude, which, with a more correct perception of the relative value of things, she might escape. She is apt, for instance, to attach as much importance, for the time, to the failure of her own musical performance, as to the failure of a bank; and she appears to care little for the invasion of a foreign country, when injury is threatened to her best attire. It is no trifling humiliation to those who mix in society, if they have been accustomed to raise their views a little higher in the contemplation of nature and of human life, to be perpetually persecuted, in the midst of agreeable and intelligent conversation, with questions about the minutiae of dress and conduct in some limited and local sphere of observation.

I would not speak thus contemptuously of the familiar habits of my sex, if I did not know that they were capable of something better, and if I did not desire—as I desire their good and their happiness—that they would rouse themselves above this paltry littleness, and learn to become, what I am confident they might be, not only equal, but interesting and instructive companions to men.

I have before remarked, that there is now, more than ever, a demand for the exercise of their highest powers, and their noblest energies, to counteract the effects of unremitting toil in obtaining the perishing things

of this life. There is a greater demand than ever upon their capabilities of enhancing social and domestic happiness; and there is an equal demand for the exercise I have already recommended, of the power they possess of investing what is material with the attributes of mind.

The littleness of character I have just described is one of the chief causes why they are not so estimable as they might be in their homes, or so interesting as they are capable of being in their conversation with men. And thus their husbands and their brothers are becoming increasingly attracted by the political associations, and the public calls now leading them away from those domestic scenes which offer little to excite the attention, or fascinate the mind.

It may be said, that English women in the present day are, in this respect at least, superior to the generation before them. But granting that they are so, the necessity for further improvement remains the same, because the habits of men are progressively involving them more deeply in the interests of public life, so that unless some strenuous efforts are made on the part of women, the far-famed homes of England will lose their boasted happiness, and with their happiness, their value in the scale of our country's moral worth.

This is a serious subject, and one which ought to appeal to every mother's bosom throughout our favored land. It ought to be the solemn inquiry of every woman who has the sacred duty of training up the young committed to her trust, in what manner she may best guard against this growing evil, so as to stem the desolating tide which seems to threaten our domestic peace.

Let her, then, after this solemn inquiry has been made, endeavor to place herself, in idea, in the situation of a traveller who ascends a mountain, and look upon the varied aspects of human life as he regards the scene presented to his view. At first he will be struck with the magnitude of the rock he is climbing, amused, perhaps, with the plants that creep along its surface, and astonished with

ning out of distant valleys, and broad rolling between other hills, amongst his eye had never penetrated before. ances a little higher, and sees other extending far and wide, and the pin- rock he at first thought so stupen- liminishing beneath his feet—higher d the broad river, with its sweeping is shrunk into a silver thread—still and the pinnacle of rock is imper- , and he feels at last that he has the actual summit of the highest in, where he can compare the real and distances of objects, and perceive mited in comparison was the line formed the original boundary of his -how small and low, and compara- ontemptible, the highest eminence to re had then ascended.

in this manner that we ought to ac- ourselves to realize those views of life, and that estimate of sublunary that would bring all to the standard real worth.

ed of by this process, and tried by this ow differently should we appreciate dinary and familiar affairs of life! ittle should we find to occupy our ts, or engage our affections, in the hat now constitute the actual business lives—how much should we find to and value in what we now despise!

to mothers, especially, that I would send this method of adjusting the bal-

ance of the infant mind, because the longer the weights are allowed to remain unequal, and the balance untrue, the more extensive must be the evil resulting from the erroneous data upon which the youthful mind will reason. And let them remember, that while the mistakes of their management will probably be exhibited more strikingly in the conduct of their sons, their daughters will extend the evil to a wider range of operation, by instilling it again into the minds of another generation.

It is not through a lifetime only, though that were sufficient for our follies—it may be through the endless ages of eternity, that our good or evil influence shall extend. I have pointed out to my countrywomen, as I pursued this work, the high ambition of preserving a nation from the dangers which threaten the destruction of its moral worth; but beyond this view, wide and exalted as it unquestionably is, there opens out a field of glory, upon which to enter might seem blessedness enough. Yet, when we contemplate the possibility of being the means of inducing others to enter with us, and those the most beloved of earth's treasures, surely it is worthy of our best energies—our most fervent zeal—our tears—our prayers—that we may so use our influence, and so employ our means, as that those whose happiness has been committed to our care, may partake with us in the enjoyment of the mansions of eternal rest.

THE
DAUGHTERS OF ENGLAND:

THEIR
POSITION IN SOCIETY, CHARACTER, AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

BY MRS. ELLIS,
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HOME HAPPY," AND "THE WIVES OF ENGLAND."

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PREFACE.

There can be no more gratifying circumstance to a writer, than to find that a work which has occupied her thoughts, and employed her pen, has also been occupying the thoughts of thousands of her countrymen; but she is gratified in a higher degree to find, that the pecuniary success she entertains on that subject, is owing to her being entertained by a vast number of the intelligent and thinking members of the community, with whom she was not previously aware of sharing, in their sympathy, or their confidence.

These are the circumstances under which "The Women of England" has been received by the public, with a degree of success, which the merits of the work would never have procured for it. No homage of mere admiration has been so welcome to the Author, as the approval it has met with at many English hearths, she has been induced to attract the attention of the public again, by a further exemplification of some subjects slightly touched upon, and a more extensive examination of others which found place in that work.

The more minute the details of individual domestic, and social duty, to which allusion is made, the more necessary it is to make a distinct classification of the different eras in woman's personal history; the Author, therefore, providing the subject into three parts, each of which will be separately considered, the character and situation of the Daughters, Wives, and Mothers of England.

The Daughters of England only form the subject of the present volume: and as in a former work the remarks which were offered to the public upon the social and domestic duties of woman, were expressly limited to the middle ranks of society in Great Britain; so, in the present, it must be clearly understood as the intention of the writer to address herself especially to the same interesting and influential class of her countrywomen. Much that is contained in that volume, too, might with propriety have been repeated here, had not the Author preferred referring the reader again to those pages, assured that she will be more readily pardoned for this liberty, than for transcribing a fainter copy of what was written in the first instance fresh from the heart.

It seems to be the peculiar taste of the present day to write, and to read, on the subject of woman. Some apology for thus taxing the patience of the public might be necessary, were it not that both honor and justice are due to a theme, in which a female sovereign may, without presumption, be supposed to sympathize with her people. Thus, while the character of the daughter, the wife, and the mother, are so beautifully exemplified in connection with the dignity of a British Queen, it is the privilege of the humblest, as well as the most exalted of her subjects, to know that the heart of woman, in all her tenderest and holiest feelings, is the same beneath the shelter of a cottage, as under the canopy of a throne.

ROSE HILL, January 10th, 1842.

THE

DAUGHTERS OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANT INQUIRIES.

If it were possible for a human being to be suddenly, and for the first time, awakened to consciousness, with the full possession of all its reasoning faculties, the natural inquiry of such a being would be, "What am I?—how am I to act?—and, what are my capabilities for action?"

The sphere upon which a young woman enters on first leaving school, or, to use a popular phrase, on "completing her education," is so entirely new to her, her mind is so often the subject of new impressions, and her attention so frequently absorbed by new motives for exertion, that, if at all accustomed to reflect, we cannot doubt but she will make these, or similar questions, the subject of serious inquiry—"What is my position in society? what do I aim at? and what means do I intend to employ for the accomplishment of my purpose?" And it is to assist any of the daughters of England, who may be making these inquiries in sincerity of heart, that I would ask their attention to the following pages; just as an experienced traveller, who had himself often stepped aside from the safest path, and found the difficulty of returning, would be anxious to leave directions for others who might follow, in order that they might avoid the dangers with which he had already become acquainted, and pursue their course with greater certainty of attaining the end desired.

First, then, What is your position in society? for, until this point is clearly settled in your own mind, it would be vain to attempt

any description of the plan to be pursued. The settlement of this point, however, must depend upon yourselves. Whether you are rich, or poor, an orphan, or the child of watchful parents—one of a numerous family, or comparatively alone—filling an exalted or an humble position—of highly gifted mind, or otherwise—all these points must be clearly ascertained before you can properly understand the kind of duty required of you. How these questions might be answered, is of no importance to the writer, in the present stage of this work. The importance of their being clearly and faithfully answered to yourselves, is all she would enforce.

For my own purpose, it is not necessary to go further into your particular history or circumstances, than to regard you as women, and, as I hope, Christian women. As Christian women, then, I address you. This is placing you on high ground; yet surely there are few of my young countrywomen who would be willing to take lower.

As women, then, the first thing of importance is to be content to be inferior to men—inferior in mental power, in the same proportion that you are inferior in bodily strength. Facility of movement, aptitude, and grace, the bodily frame of woman may possess in a higher degree than that of man; just as in the softer touches of mental and spiritual beauty, her character may present a lovelier page than his. Yet, as the great attribute of power must still be wanting there, it becomes more immediately her business to inquire how this want may be supplied.

An able and eloquent writer on "Woman's Mission," has justly observed that

woman's strength is in her influence. And, in order to render this influence more complete, you will find, on examination, that you are by nature endowed with peculiar faculties—with a quickness of perception, facility of adaptation, and acuteness of feeling, which fit you especially for the part you have to act in life; and which, at the same time, render you, in a higher degree than men, susceptible both of pain and pleasure.

These are your qualifications as mere women. As Christians, how wide is the prospect which opens before you—how various the claims upon your attention—how vast your capabilities—how deep the responsibility which those capabilities involve! In the first place, you are not alone; you are one of a family—of a social circle—of a community—of a nation. You are a being whose existence will never terminate, who *must* live for ever, and whose happiness or misery through that endless future which lies before you, will be influenced by the choice you are now in the act of making.

What, then, is the great object of your life? "To be good and happy," you will probably say; or, "To be happy and good." Which is it? For there is an important difference in giving precedence to one or the other of these two words. In one case, your aim is to secure to yourself all the advantages you can possibly enjoy, and wait for the satisfaction they produce, before you begin the great business of self-improvement. In the other, you look at your duties first, examine them well, submit yourself without reserve to their claims, and, having made them habitual, reap your reward in that happiness of which no human being can deprive you, and which no earthly event can entirely destroy.

Is it your intention beyond this to live for yourself, or for others? Perhaps you have no definite aim as relates to this subject. You are ashamed to think of living only for yourself, and deem it hard to live entirely for others; you therefore put away the thought, and conclude to leave this important subject until some future day. Do not, however, be

deceived by such a fallacious conclusion. Each day of your life will prove that you have decided, and are acting upon the decision you make on this momentous point. Your conduct in society proves it; your behavior in your family, every thought which occupies your mind, every wish you breathe, every plan you form, every pleasure you enjoy, every pain you suffer—all prove whether it is your object to live for yourself, or for others.

Again, is it your aim to live for this world only, or for eternity? This is the question of supreme importance, which all who profess to be Christians, and who think seriously, must ask and answer to themselves. There can be no delay here. Time is silently deciding this question for you. Before another day has passed, you will be so much nearer to the kingdom of heaven, or so much further from it. Another day, another, and another, of this fearful indecision, will be adding to your distance from the path of peace, and rendering your task more difficult if you should afterwards seek to return.

If it be your deliberate desire to live for this world only, all the highest faculties of your nature may then lie dormant, for there is no field of exercise here, to make the cultivation of them worth the pains. If it is your deliberate desire to live for this world only, the improvement of the bodily senses becomes more properly the object of primary interest, in order that you may taste, smell, feel, hear, and see, with more acuteness. A little invention, a little calculation, a little observation of cause and effect, may be necessary, in order that the senses may be gratified in a higher degree; but beyond this, all would indeed be worse than vanity, that would tend to raise the human mind to a knowledge of its own capabilities, and yet leave it to perish with the frail tenement it inhabits.

I cannot, however, suppose it possible that any daughter of Christian parents, in this enlightened country, would deliberately make so blind, so despicable a choice. And if your aim be to live for eternity; if you

would really make this an object, not merely to read or to talk about, but to strive after, as the highest good you are capable of conceiving, then is the great mystery of your being unravelled—then is a field of exercise laid open for the noblest faculties of your soul—then has faith its true foundation, hope its unextinguishable beacon, and charity its sure reward.

I must now take it for granted, that the youthful reader of these pages has reflected seriously upon her position in society as a woman, has acknowledged her inferiority to man, has examined her own nature, and found there a capability of feeling, a quickness of perception, and a facility of adaptation, beyond what he possesses, and which, consequently, fit her for a distinct and separate sphere; and I would also gladly persuade myself, that the same individual, as a Christian woman, has made her decision not to live for herself, so much as for others; but, above all, not to live for this world, so much as for eternity. The question then arises—What means are to be adopted in the pursuit of this most desirable end? Some of my young readers will perhaps be disposed to exclaim, “Why, this is but the old story of giving up the world, and all its pleasures!” But let them not be too hasty in their conclusions. It is not a system of giving up which I am about to recommend to them, so much as one of attaining. My advice is rather to advance than to retreat, yet to be sure that you advance in the right way. Instead, therefore, of depreciating the value of their advantages and acquirements, it is my intention to point out, so far as I am able, how all these advantages may be made conducive to the great end I have already supposed them to have in view—that of living for others, rather than for themselves—of living for eternity, rather than for time.

I have already stated, that I suppose myself to be addressing young women who are professedly Christians, and who know that the profession of Christianity as the religion of the Bible, involves responsibility for every talent they possess. By responsibility I

mean, that they should consider themselves, during the whole of their lives, as in a condition to say, if called upon to answer, whether they have made use of the best means they were acquainted with, for attaining what they believed to be the most desirable end.

Youth and health are means of the utmost importance in this great work. Youth is the season of impressions, and can never be recalled; health is a blessing of such boundless value, that when lost it may safely be said to be sighed for more than any other, for the sake of the countless advantages it affords. Education is another means, which you are now supposed to be enjoying in its fullest extent; for I have already said that I suppose myself to be addressing young women who are popularly spoken of as having just completed their education. Fresh from the master's hand, you will therefore never, possess in greater perfection the entire sum of your scholastic attainments than now. Reading and conversation, it is true, may improve your mind; but of your present possessions, in the way of learning and accomplishments, how many will be lost through indolence or neglect, and how many more will give place to claims of greater urgency, or subjects of more lively interest!

The present moment, then, is the time to take into account the right use of all your knowledge and all your accomplishments. What is the precise amount of these, we will not presume to ask; but let it not be forgotten, that your accountability extends to the time, the trouble, and the expense bestowed on your education, as well as to what you may have actually acquired. How many years have you been at school!—We will suppose from two to ten, and that from one hundred pounds, to five or more, have been expended upon you during this time; add to this the number of teachers employed in your instruction, the number of books appropriated to your use, the time—to say nothing of the patience—bestowed upon you, the anxiety of parents, who probably spared with difficulty the sum that was necessary for your education, their solicitude, their self-denial,

their prayers that this sum might be well applied ; reflect upon all these, and you will perceive that a debt has been contracted, which you have to discharge to your parents, your family, and to society—that you have enjoyed a vast amount of advantages, for which you have to account to the great Author of your being.

Such, then, is your position in life ; a Christian woman, and therefore one whose first duty is to ascertain her proper place—a sensitive and intelligent being, more quick to feel than to understand, and therefore more under the necessity of learning to feel rightly—a responsible being, with numberless talents to be accounted for, and believing that no talent was ever given in vain, but that all, however apparently trifling in themselves, are capable of being so used as to promote the great end of our being, the happiness of our fellow-creatures, and the glory of our Creator.

Let not my young friends, however, suppose that I am about to lay down for them some system of Spartan discipline, some *iron rule*, by which to effect the subjugation of all that is buoyant in health, and delightful in the season of youth. The rule I would propose to them is one by which they may become beloved as well as lovely—the source of happiness to others, as well as happy in themselves. My desire is to assist them to overcome the three great enemies to their temporal and eternal good—their selfishness, indolence, and vanity, and to establish in their stead feelings of benevolence and habits of industry, so blended with Christian meekness, that while affording pleasure to all who live within the sphere of their influence, they shall be unconscious of the charm by which they please.

I have already stated, that women, in their position in life, must be content to be inferior to men ; but as their inferiority consists chiefly in their want of power, this deficiency is abundantly made up to them by their capability of exercising influence ; it is made up to them also in other ways, incalculable in their number and extent, but in none so ef-

fectually as by that order of Divine Providence which places them, in a moral and religious point of view, on the same level with man ; nor can it be a subject of regret to any right-minded woman, that they are not only exempt from the most laborious occupations both of mind and body, but also from the necessity of engaging in those eager pecuniary speculations, and in that fierce conflict of worldly interests, by which men are so deeply occupied as to be in a manner compelled to stifle their best feelings, until they become in reality the characters they at first only assumed. Can it be a subject of regret to any kind and feeling woman, that her sphere of action is one adapted to the exercise of the affections, where she may love, and trust, and hope, and serve, to the utmost of her wishes ? Can it be a subject of regret that she is not called upon, so much as man, to calculate, to compete, to struggle, but rather to occupy a sphere in which the elements of discord cannot with propriety be admitted—in which beauty and order are expected to denote her presence, and where the exercise of benevolence is the duty she is most frequently called upon to perform ?

Women almost universally consider themselves, and wish to be considered by others, as extremely affectionate ; scarcely can a more severe libel be pronounced upon a woman than to say that she is not so. Now the whole law of woman's life is a law of love. I propose, therefore, to treat the subject in this light—to try whether the neglect of their peculiar duties does not imply an absence of love, and whether the principle of love, thoroughly carried out, would not so influence their conduct and feelings as to render them all which their best friends could desire.

Let us, however, clearly understand each other at the outset. To love, is a very different thing from a desire to be beloved. To love, is woman's nature—to be beloved is the consequence of her having properly exercised and controlled that nature. To love, is woman's duty—to be beloved, is her reward.

Does the subject, when considered in this point of view, appear less attractive ? “No,”

you reply, "it constitutes the happiness of every generous soul, to love ; and if that be the secret of our duty, the whole life of woman must be a pleasant journey on a path of flowers."

Some writers have asserted, that along with the power to love, we all possess, in an equal degree, the power to hate. I am not prepared to go this length, because I would not acknowledge the principle of hatred in any enlightened mind ; yet I do believe, that in proportion to our capability of being attracted by certain persons or things, is our liability to be repelled by others, and that along with such repulsion there is a feeling of dislike, which belongs to women in a higher degree than it does to men, in the same proportion that their perceptions are more acute, and their attention more easily excited by the minuter shades of difference in certain things. Although not willingly recognising the sensation of hatred, as applied to any thing but sin, I am compelled to use the word, in order to render my meaning more obvious ; and certainly, when we listen to the unrestrained conversation of the generality of young ladies, we cannot hesitate to suppose that the sensation of hatred towards certain persons or things, does, in reality, form part of the most important business of their lives.

To love and to hate, then, seem to be the two things which it is most natural and most easy for women to do. In these two principles how many of the actions of their lives originate ! How important is it, therefore, that they should learn in early life to love and hate aright !

Most young women of respectable parentage and education, believe that they love virtue and hate vice. But have they clearly ascertained what virtue and vice are—have they examined the meaning of these two important words by the light of the world, or by the light of divine truth ? Have they listened to the plausible reasoning of what is called *society* ; where things are often spoken of by false names, and where vulgar vice is distinguished from that which is sanctioned by good breeding ? or have they gone directly

to the eternal and immutable principles of good and evil, as explained in the Bible, which they profess to believe ? have they by this test tried all their favorite habits—their sweet weaknesses—their darling idols ? and have they been willing to abide the result of this test—to love whatever approaches that standard of moral excellence, and to renounce whatever is offensive to the pure eye of Omniscience ? Now, when we reflect that all this must be done before we can safely give ourselves up either to love or hate, we shall probably cease to think that our great duty is so easily performed.

Youth is the season for regulating these emotions as we ought, because it is comparatively easy to govern our affections when first awakened ; after they have been allowed for some time to flow in any particular channel, it requires a painful and determined effort to restrain or divert their course ; nor does the constitution of the human mind endure this revulsion of feeling unharmed. As the country over whose surface an impetuous river has poured its waters, retains, after those waters are gone, the sterile track they once pursued, marring the picture as with a scar—a seamy track of barrenness and drought ; so the course of misplaced affection leaves its indelible trace upon the character, breaking the harmony of what might otherwise have been most attractive in its beauty and repose.

There is, perhaps, no subject on which young women are apt to make so many and such fatal mistakes as in the regulation of their emotions of attraction and repulsion ; and chiefly for this reason—because there is a popular notion prevailing among them, that it is exceedingly becoming to act from the impulse of the moment, to be what they call "the creatures of feeling," or, in other words, to exclude the high attribute of reason from those very emotions which are given them, especially, to serve the most exalted purposes. "It is a cold philosophy," they say, "to calculate before you feel ;" and thus they choose to act from impulse rather than from principle.

The unnatural mother does this when she singles out a favorite child as the recipient of all her endearments, leaving the neglected one to pine away its little life. The foolish mother does this, when she withholds, from imagined tenderness, the wholesome discipline which infancy requires—choosing for her unconscious offspring a succession of momentary indulgences which are sure to entail upon them years of suffering in after life. The fickle friend does this, when she conceives a sudden distaste for the companion she has professed to love. The unfaithful wife does this, when she allows her thoughts to wander from her rightful lord. All women have done this, who have committed those frightful crimes which stain the page of history—all have acted from impulse, and by far the greater number have acted under the influence of misplaced affection. It is, indeed, appalling to contemplate the extent of ruin and of wretchedness to which woman may be carried by the force of her own impetuous and unregulated feelings. Her faults are not those of selfish calculation; she makes no stipulation for her own or others' safety; when once she renounces principle, therefore, and gives herself up to act as the mere creature of impulse, there is no hope for her, except that experience, by its painful chastisements, may bring her back to wisdom and to peace.

Does this seem a hard sentence to pronounce upon those impetuous young creatures who make it their boast that they never stay to think, that they cannot reason, and were only born to feel? Hard as it is, observation proves it true. If we do not acknowledge any regular system of conduct, habit will render that systematical which is our customary choice; and if we choose day by day to act from impulse rather than principle, we yield ourselves to a fatal and delusive system, the worst consequences of which will follow us beyond the grave.

As youth is the season for making this important choice, so it is the season for impressions. You will never remember what you acquire in after life, as you will remember

what you are acquiring now. The ledge you now obtain of evil will haul through future years, like a dark speck your path; while the glimpses of which you now perceive irradiating the in which you move, will re-appear you to the end of life, surrounded by the same bright halo which adorns them. If you have loved the virtuous and the—if you have associated yourselves with their pursuits, and made their aims and objects yours in early life—the remembrance of these early friends will form a bright in your existence, to recur to as long as existence lasts.

It is therefore of the highest importance the right government of your affection you should endeavor to form clear views of good and evil, in order that you may know how to choose the one and refuse the other; not to take things for granted; not to believe that is always best which is most approved by the world, unless you would prefer approbation of man to that of God; be willing to see the truth, whatever it may be, and as such to embrace it.

In the gospel of Christ there are truths so simple and so clear, so perfectly in keeping one with another, that none need be kept in the dark as to the principles on which they ought to act, if they are but willing to submit themselves to this rule.

I speak here of the practical part of Scriptures only; but in connection with the vivid and lasting impressions made upon the mind of youth, I would strongly enforce the importance of choosing that season for attaining an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures altogether. You can scarcely at present be aware of the extreme value of this knowledge: it will serve you in after life as a rich and precious store to draw upon only for your own consolation, and the renewal of your own faith, but for the encouragement, guidance, and support of all who come within the sphere of your influence, or who depend upon you for aid in the great work of preparing for eternity. Without this knowledge how feeble will be your arguments

most important of all subjects, how useless your assertions, and how devoid of efficacy your endeavors to disseminate the principles of Divine Truth! How enviable does the possession of this knowledge now appear to many a zealous Christian who has to deplore the consequences of a neglected youth! for I repeat, that in after life it is almost impossible to impress the mind with the same vividness, and consequently to enrich the memory with the same amount of useful knowledge, as when the aspect of the world is new, and the feelings comparatively unoccupied and unimpressed.

The same observations which occur in relation to the reading of the Scriptures at an early period of life, apply, in degree, to the acquisition of all other kinds of knowledge. Never again will the mind be so free from distraction as now; never again will the claims of duty be so few; never again will the memory be so unoccupied. If, therefore, a store of knowledge is not laid up while the mind is in this state, it will be found wanting when most needed; and difficult indeed is the task, and mortifying the situation, of those whose information has to be sought, in order to supply the demand of every hour. As well might the cultivator of the soil allow his grain to remain in the fields, until hunger reminded him that bread was wanted on his board; as the woman who expects to fill a respectable station in life, go forth into society unprovided with that supply of knowledge and information which she will there find perpetually required. The use of such knowledge is a different question, and remains yet to be discussed; but on the importance of its acquisition in the season of youth, there can be but one opinion among experienced and rational beings.

Of all kinds of knowledge, that of our own ignorance is the first to be acquired. It is an humbling lesson for those to learn, who are built up on the foundation of what is called a good education; yet such is the fact, that the knowledge which young ladies bring home with them from school, forms but a very small part of that which they will be expect-

ed to possess. Indeed, such is the illimitable nature of knowledge, that persons can only be said to know much or little by comparison. It is by comparing ourselves with others, and especially with those who are more advanced in life, that we first learn the important secret of our own deficiencies. And it is good to keep the mind open to this truth; for without having clearly ascertained our own inferiority, we should always be liable to make the most egregious mistakes; not only by telling those around us what they already know, and wearying our acquaintance with the most tedious commonplace,—but by the worst kind of false assumption—by placing ourselves in exalted positions, and thereby rendering our ignorance more conspicuous.

All this, however, though a fruitful source of folly and ridicule, is of trifling importance compared with the absolute want—the mental poverty—the moral destitution, necessarily occasioned by an absence of true knowledge; we must begin, therefore, by opening our minds to the truth, not by adopting the opinions of this or that set of persons, but by reading the works of the best authors, by keeping the mind unbiassed by the writings or the conversation of persons infected with prejudice, and by endeavoring to view every object in its full extent, its breadth, its reality, and its importance.

It is the grand defect in woman's intellectual condition, that she seldom makes any equivalent effort to do this. She is not only too often occupied with the mere frivolities of life, to estimate the true value of general knowledge; but, she is also too apt to hang her credulity upon her affections, and to take any thing for granted which is believed by those whom she loves. It is true, this servility of mind may appear to some like acting out the law of love, which I am so anxious to advocate; but how is it, if their dearest friends are in error, and if they err in such a way as to endanger their temporal and eternal interests? Is it not a higher and nobler effort of love, to see and rectify such error, than to endeavor to imbibe the same, for

the sake of being companions in folly, or in sin?

One of the greatest faults in the system of education pursued in the present day, is that of considering youth as the season for reading short and easy books. Although the ablest of female writers—I had almost said the wisest of women—has left on record her testimony against this practice, it continues to be the fashion, to place in the hands of young persons, all kinds of abstracts, summaries, and short means of arriving at facts; as if the only use of knowledge was to be able to repeat by rote a list of the dates of public events.

Now, if ever an entire history or a complete work is worth reading, it must be at an early period of life, when attention and leisure are both at our command. By the early and studious reading of books of this description, those important events which it is of so much consequence to impress upon the mind, become interwoven in the memory, with the spirit and style of the author; so that instead of the youthful reader becoming possessed of nothing more than a mere table of facts, she is in reality associating herself with a being of the highest order of mind, seeing with the eyes of the author, breathing his atmosphere, thinking his thoughts, and imbibing, through a thousand indirect channels, the very essence of his genius.

This is the only kind of reading which is really worthy of the name. Abstracts and compendiums may very properly be glanced over in after life, for the sake of refreshing the memory as to dates and facts; but unless the works of the best authors have been read in this manner in early life, there will always be something vapid in our conversation, contracted in our views, prejudiced in our mode of judging, and vulgar in our habits of thinking and speaking of things in general. In vain may we attempt to hide this great deficiency. Art may in some measure conceal what is wanting; but it cannot bring to light what does not exist. Prudence may seal the lips, and female tact may point out when to speak with safety, and

when to withhold a remark; but all those enlightened views, all that bold launching forth into the region of intellect, all the companionship of gifted minds, which intelligent women, even in their inferior capacity, may at least delight in, will be wanting to the happiness of her who chooses to waste the precious hours of youth in idleness or frivolity.

Nor is it easy for after study to make up the deficiency of what ought to have been acquired in youth. Bare information dragged in to supply the want of the moment, without arrangement, and without previous thought, too often resembles in its crudeness and inappropriate display, a provision of raw fruits, and undressed food, instead of the luxuries of an elegant and well-furnished board.

I have heard it pleaded by young women, that they did "not care for knowledge"—"did not wish to be clever." And if such persons would be satisfied to fill the lowest place in society, to creep through the world alone, or to have silly husbands, and idiot sons, we should say that their ambition was equal to their destiny. But when we see the same persons jealous of their rights as intellectual beings, aspiring to be the companions of rational men, and, above all, the early instructors of immortal beings, we blush to contemplate such lamentable destitution of right feeling, and can only forgive their presumption in consideration to their ignorance and folly.

I cannot believe of any of the young persons who may read these pages, that they could be guilty of such an act of ingratitude to the great Author of their being, and the Giver of every good and perfect gift they possess, as deliberately to choose to consign to oblivion and neglect the intellectual part of their nature, which may justly be regarded as the highest of these gifts. I would rather suppose them already acquainted with the fact, that those passions and emotions, to the exercise of which they believe themselves especially called, are many of them such as are common to the inferior orders of animals, while the possession of an understanding capable of unlimited extension, is an attribute

of the Divine nature, and one which raises them to a level with the angels.

CHAPTER II.

ECONOMY OF TIME.

IN all our pursuits, but especially in the acquisition of knowledge, it is highly important to habituate ourselves to minute calculations upon the value and progress of time. That writer who could teach us how to estimate this treasure, and how to realize its fleetness, would confer a lasting benefit upon his fellow-creatures. We all know how to talk of time flying fast. It is, in short, the subject of our most familiar proverbs, the burden of the minstrel's song, the theme of the preacher's discourse, the impress we affix to our lightest pleasures, the inscription that remains upon our tombs. Yet how little do we actually realize of the silent and ceaseless progress of time ! It is true, that one of the first exclamations which infant lips are taught to utter is the word "gone ;" and the beautiful expression, "gone for ever," occurs with frequency in our poetical phraseology. *Clean gone for ever*, is the still more expressive language of Scripture ; and if any combination of words could be made to convey to us clear and striking impressions of this idea, it would be found among those of the inspired writers. Yet still we go on from day to day, insensible, and unimpressed by this, the most sublime and appalling reality of our existence.

The fact that no single moment of our lives, whether happy or miserable, whether wasted or well employed, can ever be recalled, is of itself one of the most momentous truths with which we are acquainted—that each hour of our past existence, whether marked by wisdom or by folly, is gone for ever ; and that neither ingenuity, nor effort, nor purchase, nor prayer, can call it back. Nay, so far is it removed from the range of possibility, that we should live again for any portion of our past lives, that it was not even

among the miracles wrought by the Saviour while on earth. Other apparent impossibilities he did accomplish before the eyes of wondering multitudes, breaking the bonds of nature, and even raising the dead to life ; yet, we find not among these mighty works, that he said to any single day in man's experience, "Thou shalt dawn again." No. Even the familiar face of yesterday is turned away from us for ever ; and though so closely followed by the remembrance of the past night, as well might we attempt to grasp the stars, as to turn back and enjoy its sweet repose again.

What then is the consequence ? Since time, this great ocean of wealth, is ebbing away from us day by day, and hour by hour ; since it must inevitably diminish, and since we know the lowest rate at which it must go, though none can tell how soon it may to them be gone for ever, is it not our first duty to make the best possible use of what remains, and to begin in earnest, before another day shall escape from our hold ?

We will suppose the case of a man who finds himself the possessor of a vast estate, with the power to cultivate it as he will, and to derive any amount of revenue from it which his ingenuity or labor may obtain for him ; yet, with this condition—that an enemy shall be entitled to take away a certain portion of it every day, until the whole is gone. The enemy might, under certain circumstances, with which the owner could not be acquainted, enjoy the liberty of taking the whole at once ; but a certain part he *must* take every day. Now, would not the man who held this property on such a tenure, look sharply to his own interest, and endeavor to discover by what means he could turn his estate to the best account, before its extent should be so far diminished as to cripple his means ? Reflecting, too, that each day it was becoming less, and that the smaller its extent, the smaller would be the returns he might expect, would he not begin, without the loss of a single day, so to improve his land, to till, to sow, and to prepare for getting in his produce, as that he might derive a lasting rev-

enue of profit from the largest portion, before it should have passed out of his own hands?

A very common understanding, and a very trifling amount of knowledge, would prompt the possessor of such an estate to do this; yet, with regard to time, that most valuable of earthly possessions, how few of us act upon this principle! With some, the extent of this estate is narrowing to a very small circle; but with the class of human beings whom I am addressing, there is, in all human probability, a wider field for them to speculate upon. Illness, it is true, may come and snatch away a large portion, and death may be waiting to grasp the whole: how much more important is it, then, to begin to cultivate and reap in time!

Perhaps it is the apparent extent of our prospect in early life, which deludes us into the belief that the enemy is actually not taking any thing away. Still there are daily and hourly evidences of the lapse of time, which would serve to remind us of the impossibility of calling it back, if we would but regard them in this light. If, for instance, we have committed an egregious folly, if we have acted unjustly, thrown blame upon the innocent, or spoken unkindly to a dear friend—though it was but yesterday, last night, or this morning—not all our tears, though we might weep oceans, could wash away that single act or word; because the moment which bore that stain upon it, would be gone—and gone for ever.

Again, we scarcely become acquainted with life in any of its serious aspects, before death is presented to our notice. And where are they—"the loved, the lost?" Their days have been numbered—all those long days of companionship in which their friends might have loved, and served them better, are gone for ever. "And why," we ask, when the blow falls nearest to ourselves—when the delight of our eyes is taken away as with a stroke—"why do not the sun, and the moon, and the stars, delay their course?—why do the flowers not cease to bloom?—the light and cheerful morning not fail to return? above all, why

do those around us continue their accustomed avocations? and why do we join them at last, as if nothing had occurred?" It is because time passes on, and on, and neither life, nor death, nor joy, nor sorrow, nor any of the changes in our weal or wo, present the minutest hindrance to his certain progress, or retard for a single moment his triumphant and irresistible career.

Nor is it simply as a whole, that we have to take into account the momentous subject of time. Every year, and month, and day, have their separate amount of responsibility; but especially the season of youth, because the habits we acquire during that period, have an influence upon the whole of our after lives.

The habit of making correct calculations upon how much can be done in any stated portion of time, is the first thing to begin with, for without this, we are very apt to go on with any thing that may happen to interest us, to the culpable neglect of more important duties. Thus, though it may be well for a man to pluck the weeds up in his garden for half an hour after breakfast; yet, if his actual business lies in the counting-house, or the exchange, it would be worse than folly for him to remain plucking weeds up for half the day.

In order to make the best use of time, we must lay out beforehand the exact amount proportioned to every occupation in which we expect to engage. Casualties will perpetually occur demanding an additional allowance, and something must consequently be given up in exchange; but still our calculations may generally be made with a degree of certainty, which leaves no excuse for our being habitually at a loss what to do.

There is a class of young persons, and I fear not a very small one, who rise every morning trusting to the day to provide its own occupations and amusements. They descend from their chambers with a listless, dreamy hope that something will occur to interest, or enliven them, never imagining that they themselves are called upon to enliven and interest others. Such individuals

being liable to disappointment every day, almost always learn to look upon themselves as unfortunate beings, less privileged than others, and, in short, ill-treated by faith, or rather by Providence, in being placed where they are.

It is this waiting to be interested, or amused, by any thing that may chance to happen, which constitutes the great bane of a young woman's life, and while dreaming on in this most unprofitable state, without any definite object of pursuit, their minds become the prey of a host of enemies, whose attacks might have been warded off by a little wholesome and determined occupation. Their feelings, always too busy for their peace, become morbid, restless, and ungovernable, for want of proper exercise; while imagination, allowed to run riot over a boundless field of vague and half-formed observations, leads their affections in her train, to fix upon whatever object caprice or fancy may select.

It is not attributing too much importance to the right economy of time, to say that it might prevent all this. I presume not to lay down rules for the occupation of every hour. Particular duties must always appertain to particular situations; and since the necessary claims upon our attention are as varied as our individual circumstances, that which in one would be a right employment of time, would be a culpable breach of duty in another.

There are, however, a few general rules which cannot be too clearly or too deeply impressed upon the mind—rules which the rich and the poor would be equally benefited by adopting; which the meanest and the most exalted individual would alike find it safe to act upon; and by which the wisest and best of mankind might increase their means and extend their sphere of usefulness to their fellow-creatures.

The first of these rules is to accustom yourselves every morning to say what you are intending to do; and every night, with equal faithfulness, to say what you have actually done during the day. If you find any material difference between what you have intended, and what you have achieved, try to proportion them better, and the next day,

either lay out for yourself, or, what is far better, endeavor to accomplish more. This is the more to be recommended, because we learn, both by experience and observation, that whenever we bring down our good intentions to a lower scale, it is a certain symptom of some failure either in our moral, intellectual, or physical power. Still there is much allowance to be made for the inexperience of youth, in not being able to limit good intentions by the bounds of what is practicable; it is therefore preferable that a little should be taken off, even from what is good in itself, rather than that you should go on miscalculating time, and means, to the end of life.

There are persons, and some considerably advanced in years, who habitually retire to rest every night, surprised and disappointed that the whole of their day's work has not been done. Now, it is evident that such persons must be essentially wrong in one of these two things—either in their calculations upon the value and extent of time, or in their estimate of their own capabilities; and in consequence of these miscalculations, they have probably been making the most serious mistakes all their lives. They have been promising what they could not perform; deceiving and disappointing their friends, and those who were dependent upon them; besides harassing their own spirits, and destroying their own peace, by frightful miscalculations of imperative claims, when there was no residue of time at all proportioned to such requirements.

The next rule I would lay down is, if possible, of more importance than the first. It is, that you should always be able to say what you are doing, and not merely what you are going to do. "I am going to be so busy—I am going to get to my work—I am going to prepare for my journey—I am going to learn Latin—I am going to visit a poor neighbor." These, and ten thousand other "goings," with the frequent addition of the word "just" before them, are words which form a net-work of delusion, by which hundreds of really well-intentioned young persons

are completely entangled. "I am just going to do this or that good work," sounds so much like "I am really doing it," that the conscience is satisfied for the moment; yet how vast is the difference between these two expressions when habit has fixed them upon the character!

To the same class of persons who habitually say, "I am going," rather than "I am doing," belong those who seldom know what they really are about; who, coming into a room for a particular purpose, and finding a book there by chance, open it, and sit down to read for half an hour, or an hour, believing all the while that they are going to do the thing they first intended; or who, setting out to walk for the benefit of their health, drop in upon a pleasant acquaintance by the way, still thinking they are going to walk, until the time for doing so has expired, when they return home, with cold feet and aching heads, half fancying that they have really walked, and disappointed that exercise has produced no better effect.

Now, in these two cases, there may be as little harm in reading the book as in calling upon the acquaintance, and nothing wrong in either: but the habit of doing habitually what we had not intended to do, and leaving undone what we had intended, has so injurious an effect in weakening our resolutions, and impairing our capacity for making exact calculations upon time and means, that one might pronounce, without much hesitation, upon a person accustomed to this mode of action, the sentence of utter inability to fill any situation of usefulness or importance among mankind.

I am inclined to think we should all be sufficiently astonished, if we would try the experiment through a single day, of passing quickly and promptly from one occupation to another. It is, in fact, these "goings to do," which constitute so large an amount of wasted time, for which we are all accountable. Few persons deliberately intend to be idle; few will allow that they have been so from choice; yet how vast a proportion of the human race are living in a state of self-de-

ception, by persuading themselves they are not idle, when they are merely going to act. Promptness in doing whatever it is right to do *now*, is one of the great secrets of living. By this means, we find our capabilities increased to an amazing amount; nor can we ever know what they really are, until this plan of conduct has been fully tried.

Wisely has it been said, by the greatest of moral philosophers, that there is *a time for every thing*. Let it be observed, however, that he has not, among his royal maxims, spoken of a time for doing nothing; and it is fearful to think how large a portion of the season of youth is spent in this manner.

Nor is it absolute idleness alone which claims our attention. The idleness of self-delusion has already been described. But there is, besides this, a busy idleness, which operates with equal force against the right economy of time. Busy idleness arises chiefly from a restlessness of feeling, which, without any calculation as to the fitness of time or place, or the ultimate utility of what is done, hurries its possessor into a succession of trifling or ill-timed occupations, frequently as annoying to others as they are unproductive of any beneficial result. Busy idleness is also a disease most difficult to cure, because it satisfies for the moment that thirst for occupation with which every human being is more or less affected, and which has been implanted in our nature for the wisest of purposes. It is under the influence of this propensity to busy idleness, that, with multitudes who have no extraordinary capability for receiving pleasure, amusement is made to supply the place of occupation, and childish trifling that of intellectual pursuit.

It may be asked, how does the law of love operate here? I answer, precisely in this way—We are never so capable of being useful to others, as when we have learned to economize our own time; to make exact calculations as to what we are able, or not able, to do in any given period; and so to employ ourselves as to make the trifles of the moment give place to more important avocations. Without having cultivated such habits, our

intentions, nay, our promises, must often fall short of what we actually perform ; so that in time, and after many painful disappointments, our friends will cease to depend upon our aid, believing, what may all the while be unjust to our feelings, that we have never entertained any earnest desire to promote their interest.

Above all other subjects, however, connected with the consideration of time, the law of love bears most directly upon that of punctuality. No one can fail in this point, without committing an act of injury to another. If the portion of time allotted to us in this life be aptly compared to a valuable estate, of which an enemy robs us by taking away a certain portion every day ; surely it is a hard case that a friend must usurp the same power, and take away another portion, contrary to our expectations, and without any previous stipulation that it should be so. Yet, of how much of this precious property do we deprive our friends during the course of a lifetime, by our want of punctuality ? and not our friends only, but all those who are in any way connected with, or dependent upon us. Our friends, indeed, might possibly forgive us the injury for the love they bear us ; but there are the poor—the hard-working poor, whose time is often their wealth ; and strangers, who owe us no kindness, and who consequently are not able to endure this injury without feelings of irritation or resentment.

The evil, too, is one which extends in its consequences, and widens in its influence, beyond all calculation. Yet, for the sake of conveying to the youthful and inexperienced reader, some idea of its mode of operation, we will suppose the case of a man carrying letters or despatches along one of our public roads, and so calculating his time as to appoint to be met at some post on the road every hour, by this means to transmit his despatches by other couriers along branch-roads to distant parts of the country. The person whose business it is to place these despatches in his hand at a certain time and place, is half an hour too late ; consequently,

all the couriers along the road are delayed in the same proportion, and there is the loss of half an hour occasioned, not only to each of them, but to all who have depended upon their arrival at a certain time. It is true, that few of us are placed in the same relative position as this man, with regard to our fellow-creatures ; yet, none of us act alone ; and the mistress of a house, who detains a poor workman half an hour by her want of punctuality, may be the means of his receiving reproof, nay, even abuse, from others who have lost their time in consequence of his delay ; while others still, and others yet beyond, through the wider range of a more extensive circle, may have been calculating their time and means in dependence upon the punctuality of this poor man.

If on particular occasions which recur every day, we find we are generally half an hour too late, the evil to others is sometimes easily remedied by making our appointment half an hour later, and abiding by it. But such is not the plan of those who are habitually negligent of punctuality. They go on, varying from their time, one day perhaps an hour, another a quarter of an hour, and occasionally perhaps being before it, until the whole machinery of intercourse with their fellow-creatures is deranged—those of their dependents who are inclined to indolence taking advantage of their delay ; those who are impatient, fretting themselves into angry passions at this wanton waste of their precious time ; and many whose connection might perhaps have been highly valuable, leaving them altogether, in consequence of being wearied or disgusted with the uncertainty which attended all their proceedings.

It is not, therefore, our own time only that is wasted by our want of punctuality, but hours, and days, and months, and years of the precious property of others, over which we had no right, and which was not intentionally submitted to our thoughtless expenditure.

It is often alleged by young persons as being of no use for them to be punctual, when others are not so, and that they only waste

their own time by being ready at the appointed moment. All this may be too true; for parents and seniors in a family often have themselves to blame for the want of punctuality in the junior members. Yet is it of no importance, whether we are the causes or the subjects of injury—whether we practise injustice towards others, or only endure it ourselves? Surely no generous mind can hesitate a moment which alternative to choose, especially when such choice refers not to any single act, but to a course of conduct pursued through a whole lifetime. Of what material consequence will it appear to us on the bed of death, that certain individuals, at different times of our lives, have kept us waiting for a few hours, which might certainly have been better employed? But it will be of immense importance at the close of life, if, by our habitual want of punctuality, we have been the cause of an enormous waste of time, the property of countless individuals, to whom we can make no repayment for any single act of such unlicensed robbery. It is the principle of integrity, then, upon which our punctuality must be founded, and the law of love will render it habitual.

As there are few persons who deliberately intend to be idle; so there are perhaps still fewer who deliberately intend to waste their own time, or that of their friends. It is the lapse of years, the growth of experience, and the establishment of character on some particular basis, which tell the humiliating truth, that time has been culpably and lamentably wasted. There are other delusions, however, besides those already specified, under which this fruitless expenditure is unconsciously carried on; and none is perhaps, as a whole, more destructive to usefulness, or more fatal to domestic peace, than the habit of being always a little too late—too late to come—too late to go—too late to meet at the place of appointment—too late to be useful—too late to do good—too late to repent and seek forgiveness while the gates of mercy are unclosed. All these may be the consequences of setting out in life, without a firm determi-

nation never to yield to the dangerous habit of being a little too late.

In this case it is not so much the absolute waste of time, as the waste of feeling, which is to be regretted; for no one can be habitually ever so little too late, without experiencing at times a degree of hurry and distraction of mind, most destructive of domestic comfort and individual peace.

To be a few minutes too early, may appear to many as inconsistent with the order of the present day, when every thing is pushed to extremity, and it may consequently be considered as a useless waste of time; yet I am inclined to think that the moments in which we can say, "I am ready," are among some of the most precious of our lives, as affording us opportunity for that calm survey of human affairs, without which we should pass in a state of comparative blindness along the thickly-peopled walks of life. To be ready a little before the time, is like pausing for a moment to see the great machine of human events at work, to mark the action and the play of every part, and to observe the vast amount of feeling which depends upon every turn of the mighty wheel of time.

Who that has stood still, and watched the expression of the human countenance during the last struggles of a too late preparation for pleasure, for business, or for trial, has not, in a single moment, read more plain truths on that unguarded page than years of its ordinary expression would have unfolded? Besides this, however, the great advantage we derive from being habitually too early, is the power it gives us to husband our forces, to make our calculations upon coming events, to see how to improve upon yesterday, and to resolve to do so; but, above all other means of strengthening our better resolutions, it affords us time for those mental appeals for Divine blessing and support, without which we have no right to expect either safety, assistance, or success. Fortified in this manner, it is less likely that any unexpected event should unsettle the balance of our minds, because we go forth with calmness, prepared either to enjoy with moderation and

thankfulness, or to suffer with patience and resignation.

Young persons are often beguiled into the dangerous habit of being a little too late, by the apparent unimportance of each particular transgression of the kind during the season of youth. If, for instance, they are a little too late for breakfast, the matron of the family commences operations without them, and they can easily gain time upon some of the senior members. At the dinner-hour it is the same. They have only to calculate upon a few impatient words, and a few angry looks ; and it is not the least unfavorable feature of their case, that to such looks and words they become so accustomed as scarcely to heed them, nor is it often that they bring any more serious consequences upon themselves by their delay, because the young are generally so kindly assisted and cared for by their friends, that by a long, and patient, and often-repeated process of helping, urging, and entreating, they are, for the most part, got ready for every important occasion, or, in other words, are seldom left behind.

It is in more advanced life that the evil begins to tell upon the happiness of all around them ; and let it never be forgotten, that the more exalted their situation, the wider their sphere of influence, the more extensive are the evils resulting from any wrong line of conduct they may choose to pursue. The season of early youth is, therefore, the best time for correcting this tendency, before it has begun to bear with any serious effects upon the good or the happiness of others.

We will suppose the case of a mistress of a family preparing for a journey. Having been a little too late with every thing which had to be done, there is a frightful accumulation of demands upon her attention during the last day, but especially the last half-hour before her departure. In this state of hurry and confusion wrong orders are given, which have to be counteracted ; messengers are sent hither and thither, they scarcely know for what, and still less where to find the thing they seek. Servants grow disorderly, children teasing or frightened, the husband is

angry, and sharp words pass between him and his wife. Accidents, of course, occur, for which the innocent are blamed. Time—pitiless time rolls on, apparently with accelerating speed. The distant sound of carriage-wheels is heard. At this crisis a string breaks. Why did it never break before ? A flash of absolute passion distorts the face of the matron. All dignity is lost. The carriage is at the door—little children stretch forth their arms—there is no time for tenderness. Scarcely a farewell is heard, as the mother rushes past them, leaving behind her, perhaps for months of absence, the remembrance of her angry countenance, her unjust reproaches, and the apparent want of affection with which she could hurry away from the very beings she loved best in the world. The servants in such a family as this, can scarcely be blamed if they rejoice when their mistress is gone ; the husband, if he finds abundant consolation in the peace his absent partner has bequeathed him ; or the children, if they fail to look with any very eager expectation to the time of their mother's return.

How, then, does the law of love operate here ? It operates upon the woman who is seldom too late, so that when a journey is in expectation, all things are arranged in due time, leaving the last day more especially for attention to the claims of affection, and the regulation of household affairs, upon which will depend the comfort of her family during her absence. Rising a little earlier than usual on that morning, she commends them individually and collectively to the care of the Father of all the families of earth ; and this very act gives a depth, a tenderness, and a serenity to the feelings of affection with which she meets them, it may be for the last time. Kind words are then spoken, which dwell upon the memory in after years ; provision is made for the feeble or the helpless ; every little peculiarity of character or constitution is taken into account ; last charges—those precious memorials of earthly love—are given, and treasured up. There is time even for private and confidential intercourse between the husband and the wife ; there is time for

a respectful farewell to every domestic ; there is time, too, for an expression of thankfulness for each one of the many kind offices rendered on that sacred day. At last the moment of separation arrives. Silent tears are seen in every eye, but they are not absolutely tears of sorrow ; for who can feel sorrow, when the cup of human love is so full of sweetness ?

If, during the absence of such a mother, sickness or death should assail any member of her family, how will the remembrance of that day of separation soothe the absent ; while the kind words then uttered, the kind thoughts then felt, the kind services then rendered, will recur to remembrance, invested with a power and a beauty, which never would have been fully known, had no such separation taken place.

It is possible the natural affection of the wife and the mother, in both these cases, may have been the same ; yet, how different must be the state of their own feelings, and of those of their separate families, one hour after their departure ! and not during that hour only, but during weeks and months, nay, through the whole of their lives ! for the specimen we have given, is but one among the many painful scenes which must perpetually occur in the experience of those who are habitually too late.

It is true, I have extended the picture a little beyond the season of early youth, but this was absolutely necessary in order to point out the bearing and ultimate tendency of this dangerous habit—a habit, like many of our wrong propensities, so insidious in its nature, as scarcely to tell upon the youthful character ; while, like many other plants of evil growth, its seed is sown at that period of life, though we scarcely perceive the real nature of the poisonous tree, until its bitter root has struck too deep to be eradicated. It is, therefore, the more important, in all ~~we~~ purpose, and in all we do, that we should *look to the end*, and not awake, when it is too late, to find that we have miscalculated either our time or our means.

CHAPTER III.

CLEVERNESS—LEARNING—KNOWLEDGE.

In order to speak with more precision of those attainments which youth is the season for acquiring, I must class them under three different heads—cleverness, learning, and knowledge. By cleverness, I would be understood to mean, dexterity and aptness in doing every thing which falls within the sphere of ordinary duty. Cleverness of the hand, is no mean attainment in a woman. It is, in fact, of almost as much value to her, as dexterity to the surgeon ; for though he may have knowledge to understand what is best to be done, unless his hand be skilful to do it, his knowledge will avail him but little in any case of emergency, where the life of a fellow-creature is at stake.

The cleverness of the hand, therefore, though almost entirely neglected in modern education, except as relates to practice on the keys of the piano, is a qualification which, while it takes nothing away from the charm of feminine delicacy, imparts the additional charm of perpetual cheerfulness, added to a capability of general usefulness, and a consequent readiness for action whenever occasion may require our services.

To know how to do every thing which can properly come within a woman's sphere of duty, ought to be the ambition of every female mind. For my own part, I do not believe I have ever learned any thing, even down to such a trifle as a new stitch, but I have found a use for it, and that in a surprisingly short space of time ; for either it has occupied what would otherwise have been idle time, it has used up what would otherwise have been wasted material, or I have taught it to others who were more in need of it than myself. Besides which, there is the grand preventive this dexterity supplies against ever being at a loss what to do ; the happiness it affords, both to ourselves and others, to be perpetually employed ; the calm it diffuses over a naturally restless temperament ; but above all, the ability this habit affords in cases of sickness, or other emergency, to

turn all our means to account in the service of our friends.

This, however, can never be so thoroughly effected, as when the cleverness of the hand is aided by the faculty of invention. And here I would ask, how is it, how can it be, that the exercise of this faculty forms so trifling a part of female education? Never does a woman enter upon the actual business of life, whatever it may be, but her ingenuity is taxed in some way or other; and she suffers blame, or endures contempt, just so far as she fails in this respect. If, at a critical juncture of time, any accident takes place in household affairs, woman is expected to cover up the defect, or supply the deficiency. If any article of common use is missing when wanted, woman is expected to provide a substitute. If the accustomed supply of comfort or enjoyment fails, it is woman's fault. No matter how great the deficiency of material with which she has to work, domestic comfort, order, and respectability rest with her, and she must be accountable for the falling short in any, or all of these. It is true that she is endowed by nature with the faculty of invention, in a higher degree, perhaps, than men, and skilfully and nobly does she sometimes use it; but does not the very fact of this endowment teach us that it has thus been provided by Providence for the part she has to act in life? and ought we not the more sedulously to carry out this merciful design, by a higher cultivation of so useful a faculty? Why, for instance, should we not have premiums on a small scale, or other encouragements, in our public seminaries, for the most ingenious and useful inventions? Why should there not be a little museum attached to every school, in which such specimens of ingenuity could be kept? We all know there are few simple pleasures which surpass those derived from the exercise of the faculty of invention; might it not, therefore, be rendered as profitable as it is amusing, by filling up some of the idle hours of a school-girl's life, and occupying the time too frequently appropriated to mere gossip on subjects by no means calculated to im-

prove the morals, or enlarge the understanding?

The little girl of four years old, seated on a footstool beside her mother, is less happy in the rosy cheeks and shining curls of her new doll, than in the shawl she has herself invented for it, or the bonnet her sister is making. It is the same throughout the whole season of early youth. What is drawing, that most delightful of all amusements to a child, but the exercise of the faculty of invention? So soon as this exercise is reduced to a science,—so soon as “perspective dawns,” and the juvenile performer is compelled to copy, the charm of the performance in a great measure ceases. It is true, it will be restored a hundredfold when acquaintance with the rules of art shall enable the young student again to design, and with better effect; but during her infancy, she has far more enjoyment in her own red-brick house, with a volume of green smoke issuing from every chimney—and in her own round-bodied man, whose nose is emulous of a beak, and his eye in the centre of his head—than in the most elaborate and finished drawings which a master could lay before her; not, certainly, because she sees more symmetry or likelihood in these creatures of her own formation, but simply because of the pleasure she enjoyed while inventing them.

It is a subject of delightful reflection, and it ought to be a source of unfailing gratitude, that some of those natural propensities which afford us the greatest pleasure, are, in reality, capable of being made conducive to the greatest good. Thus, when the little quiet girl is so happy and so busy with her pencils, or her scissors, she is indulging that natural propensity of her mind, which is, in after life, to render her still happier, by enabling her to turn to the best account every means of increasing the happiness of those around her, of rendering assistance in any social or domestic calamity that may occur, of supply in every time of household need, and of comfort in every season of distress.

But if the value of invention, and the ready application of existing means, be over-

looked under all other circumstances in a sick-room, none can doubt its efficacy. The visitations of sickness, however unlikely or unlooked for they may be to the young, are liable to all—the gay and the grave, the rich and the poor, the vigorous and the feeble; and we have only to visit some of those favorite spots of earth which have become the resort of invalids from every land, to see how often the most delicate females are plunged into all the solemn and sacred mysteries of the chamber of sickness and death.

It is under such circumstances that ingenuity, when connected with kindly feeling, and readiness to assist, is of the utmost possible value. There may be the same kind feeling without it; but how is such feeling to operate?—by teasing the invalid perpetually about what he would like, or not like? The querulous and fretful state of mind which suffering so often induces, is ill-calculated to brook this minute investigation of its wants and wishes; and such is the capricious nature of a sickly appetite, that every anticipated relish is apt to pall, before the feeble desire can be gratified. We are therefore inflicting positive pain upon the sufferer—mental pain, in addition to that of the body, by compelling him to choose, and then to appear discontented, or ungrateful, in becoming dissatisfied with his own choice.

How thankful, then, ought women to be, that they possess, by nature, the faculty of invention; and how careful ought to be their cultivation of this precious gift, when it can enable them to relieve from pain and annoyance those who already feel that they have enough of both! How happy, in comparison, is that woman, who, by the habitual exercise of her ingenuity, is able so to make the most of the means within her power, as to supply, without its having to be solicited, the very thing which is most needed; and though her endeavors may possibly fail again and again, there will sometimes be a smile of grateful acknowledgment on the lips of the sufferer, that will richly repay her most anxious care; or, if not, she will still be happier, when oc-

cupied by a series of inventions for the benefit of one she loves, than those can be who think, and think again, and end by only wishing they could think of any thing that could accommodate or relieve.

The faculty of invention, however, will fail of more than half its use, if the hand is not early accustomed to obey the head, in all those little niceties of management which female occupations require. There must be a facility in the application and movement of the hand, which can only be acquired in early life; and I would humbly suggest the importance of this in our public seminaries for young ladies, for I confess it has often seemed to me a little hard, that young women of the middle ranks of life, should be dismissed from these establishments, after having spent years with little more exercise of the hand than is required by the music-master; yet are they no sooner plunged into active life, as women—I do not say, as ladies—than the readiest and best, nay, sometimes, even the cheapest, method of doing every thing which a woman can do, is expected of them. In all those cases of failure which must necessarily ensue, parents and brothers are equally dissatisfied; while they themselves, disappointed that their accomplishments are no longer valued as they were at school, and perplexed with the new, and apparently humbling duties which present themselves, sink into a state of profitless despondency; and all this is owing to the simple fact of their not having been prepared, when young, for what is expected of them in after life.

Far be it from me, however, to advocate the old system of stitching, as the best kind of education for the daughters of England, of whom higher and nobler things are required. But why should we not choose the medium between two extremes? and while we reprobate the elaborate needlework of our grandmothers, why should we not be equally solicitous to avoid the evils arising from an entire disuse of the female hand, until the age of womanhood? Neither would I be supposed to advocate that entire absorption

of the female mind in a world of worsted work, which is now so frequently the case immediately on leaving school, and which I am inclined to attribute, in a great measure, to a necessary reaction of the mind, after having been occupied during the whole term of scholastic discipline, in what is so foreign to its nature, that the first days—nay, months, and even years, of liberty, are spent in the busy idleness of assorting different shades of Berlin wool.

These, I must allow, are pleasant amusements in their way, and when the head and the heart are weary, may have their refreshment and their use; but even in these occupations, the beaten track of custom is too much followed. The hand is more exercised than the head. To imitate is more the object than to invent, while, if the same pains were taken to create a pattern as to borrow one, new ideas might be perpetually struck out, and the mind, even in this humble sphere of action, might find as much employment as the hand.

It is sometimes made the subject of regret by learned, well-informed, and highly-gifted women, that the occupations peculiar to our sex are so trifling; or, in other words, that they afford so little exercise for the mind. To say nothing here of the folly and the danger of allowing ourselves to despise such duties as God has set before us, I am disposed to question whether it is not in a great measure our own fault that these duties are invested with so little mind. Invention is surely no mean faculty, and I have shown how it may be exercised, even upon the most trifling affairs of woman's life. Economy is no mean principle, and this may be acted upon in the application of the humblest means to any particular end. Industry is no mean virtue, and we may be practising this, while filling up every spare moment with some occupation of the hand. Cheerfulness is no mean embellishment to the female character; and seldom is cheerfulness preserved, when the hand is allowed to be useless and idle.

I confess there is a listless way of merely "getting through" with female occupations,

in which little mind, and still less good feeling, is called into action: but when a lively invention is perpetually at work; when a careful economy is practised for the sake of making the most of all our materials, and sparing our money, it may be for the purpose of assisting the sorrowful or the destitute. Where habits of industry are thus engrafted into the character; and where cheerfulness lights up every countenance in a family thus employed; especially where there is any considerable degree of talent or illumination of mind, how many brilliant thoughts may arise out of the simplest subject, and how much rational enjoyment may be derived from the humblest occupations!

I cannot dismiss the subject of cleverness, or dexterity in doing whatever may come within the sphere of female duty, without observing that its importance refers in an especial manner to domestic usefulness. Nor let the young lady, who may read this, too hastily turn away with contempt from so humble a strain of advice. It does not follow, because she knows how to do every thing, that she must always do it. But it does follow, that if she wishes to stand at the head of her household, to be respected by her own servants, and to feel herself the mistress of her own affairs, that she must be acquainted with the best method of doing every thing upon which domestic comfort depends.

These remarks can of course have no reference to families who occupy a higher rank in society, and whose means enable them to employ a housekeeper as the medium of communication between the mistress and the servants. I speak of those who have to give orders themselves, or who, in cases of illness, receiving company, or other derangements of the usual routine of domestic affairs, have to take an active part in household economy themselves. To such, how unfortunate is it not to have learned, before they attempt to direct others, the best method of applying every means so as to be productive of the greatest comfort, at the least expense! I would of course be understood to mean, with the least possible risk of absolute waste. Your table

may be sumptuous or simple, your furniture costly or plain—that will depend upon the rate at which you fix your expenditure, and has nothing to do with the point in question. The absolute waste of material, in whatever is manufactured, prepared, or produced, is an evil of a distinct nature, and can never be allowed to any extent, where it is possible to be avoided, without a deficiency of common sense, or moral rectitude.

In my observations upon the women of England, I have dwelt so much upon the desirableness of domestic usefulness, that I cannot with propriety enlarge upon it here. Yet, such is my view of this subject, that if I were asked which of the three was most valuable in a woman—cleverness, learning, or knowledge; and supposing all to have an equal accompaniment of good sense, good feeling, and good principle, I believe I should answer in favor of the first, provided the situation of the woman was in the middle rank of life, and she could not enjoy more than one of these valuable recommendations.

Youth is considered to be so exclusively the season for acquiring a skilful touch in the practice of music, that scarcely is the experiment ever tried of acquiring the same dexterity in after life. If then it is the only time for attaining excellence in what is merely an embellishment to the character, of how much importance must this season be for practising the hand in that ready obedience to the head in all affairs of actual usefulness, which justly entitles its possessor to the distinction of cleverness!

In order to convey a more correct idea of my meaning, when I speak of cleverness, I will simply add, that a woman possessed of this qualification is seldom at a loss what to do; seldom gives wrong orders; seldom mistakes the right means of producing the end she desires; seldom spoils, or wastes, or mismanages the work she undertakes; never hurries to and fro in a state of confusion, not knowing what is best to be done first; and never yields to her own feelings, so as to incapacitate her from the service of others, at any critical moment when her assistance may

be most needed. Nor are her recommendations only of a negative kind. Her habitual self-possession is a positive good, her coolness, her promptitude, her power to adapt herself to circumstances, all give worth and dignity to her character in the estimation of others; while they afford peace and satisfaction to her own mind.

LEARNING, Dr. Johnson tells us, is skill in languages or science. With regard to the time spent in the acquisition of languages, I fear I must incur the risk of being thought neither liberal nor enlightened; for I confess, I do not see the value of languages to a woman, except so far as they serve the purpose of conversation with persons of different countries, or acquaintance with the works of authors, whose essential excellences cannot be translated into our own tongue; and how far these two objects are carried out by the daughters of England, either from necessity or inclination, I must leave to their own consideration.

With regard to the dead languages, the former of these two motives cannot apply. It may, however, be justly considered as a wholesome exercise of the mind, provided there is nothing better to be done, for young women to learn Greek and Latin; but beyond this, I feel perfectly assured, that for any knowledge they will acquire through the medium of the best Greek and Latin authors, our most approved translations would more than answer their purpose. It is true, that a knowledge of these languages gives an insight into the meaning of many important words in our own; yet, an early and extensive reading of our standard books would unquestionably give the same, along with a greater fund of useful and practical information; and for every purpose of female elocution, I strongly suspect that good Saxon-English would be found as clear, impressive, and convincing, as any which can boast a more classical construction.

There is one motive assigned in the present day, for young ladies learning Greek, but especially Hebrew, which I should be sorry to treat with irreverence or disrespect,

because it has weight with some of the most serious and estimable of their sex. I mean the plea of being thus enabled to read the Scriptures in the original. Now, if such young ladies have really nothing better to do, or if from the high order of their natural capabilities they have a chance, even the remotest, of being able to throw some additional light upon our best translations, far be it from me to wish to put the slightest obstacle in their way. Yet, I own it does appear to me a little strange, that after considering the length of time required for attaining a sufficient knowledge of these languages, and the number of learned commentators and divines, who have spent the best part of their valuable lives, in laboring to ascertain the true meaning of the language of the Scriptures, and when the result of those labors is open to the public,—it does appear to me a little strange, that any young woman, of moderate abilities, should enter into the field with such competitors, in the hope of attaining a nearer approach to the truth than they have done; and I have been led to question, whether it would not be quite as well for such individuals to be content to take the Bible as it is, and to employ the additional time they would thus become possessed of, in disseminating its truths and acting out its principles, so far as they have already been made clear to the humblest understanding.

These remarks, however, have especial reference to moderate abilities; because there is with some persons a peculiar gift for the acquisition of languages; and believing, as I do, that no gift is bestowed in vain, I would not presume to question the propriety of such young persons spending at least some portion of their lives, in endeavoring to acquire the power of doing for themselves, what has already been done for them.

It is a remarkable phenomenon in our nature, that some of those persons who have the greatest facility in acquiring languages, have the least perception of the genius or spirit of such languages when they are acquired. The knowledge of many languages

obtains for its possessor the distinction of being learned; but if she goes no further, if she never expatiates in the new world of literature, into which her knowledge might have introduced her; she is but like a curious locksmith, who opens the door upon some hidden treasure, and who, instead of examining or appropriating the precious store to which he has obtained access, goes on to another door, and then another, satisfied with merely being master of the keys, and knowing how to unlock at his pleasure.

To women of this class of mind, provided they belong to the middle rank of life, and are not intended either for teachers or translators, of what possible use can be the learning of the dead languages? and to others similarly circumstanced, but without this peculiar talent, there are excellent translations in almost every library, from which they will acquire a greater number of ideas, and become more intimately acquainted with the spirit of the writer, and the customs and the times of which he wrote, than it is probable they ever could have been from their own reading of the same works in the original.

With regard to modern languages, the case is very different. Facilities of communication between one country and another are now so great, that it has become no longer a dream of romance, but a matter of reasonable calculation, with our young women, even in the humble ranks of life, that they should some time or other go abroad. With our modern writers, too, it is so much the custom to indulge in the use of at least three languages, while professing to write in one, as to render it almost a necessary part of female education to learn both French and Italian. If these languages have not been sufficiently attended to at school, they may, therefore, with the utmost propriety, be added to such studies as it is desirable to continue for some years afterwards; and while their more perfect acquisition is an object of laudable desire, the mind, as it expands in its progress towards maturity, will be better able to appreciate the beauties they unfold.

I have been compelled, during the course

of these remarks, to use an expression which requires some explanation. I have said, that a young woman may with propriety learn even the dead languages, provided she has nothing better to do; by which, I would be understood to mean, provided she does not consequently leave undone what would render her more useful or amiable as a woman. The settlement of this question must depend entirely upon the degree of her talent, and the nature of her position in life. If she has no other talent likely to make her so useful as that which is employed in learning Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, this settles the point at once, or if she has no duties so important to her as to ascertain the derivation of words, or to study the peculiarities of heathen writers, then by all means let her be a learned lady, for every study, every occupation of mind, provided it does not include what is evil, must be preferable to absolute idleness.

But may we not turn to the consideration of science as opening a wide field of interesting study, which does more to enlarge the mind, and give right views of common things, than the mere acquisition of language?

"Science!—what have we to do with science?" exclaim half a dozen soft voices at once. Certainly not to give public lectures, nor always to attend them, unless you go with your understanding prepared by some previous reading, or acquaintance with the subjects, which in the lecture-room are necessarily rather illustrated, than fully explained. Neither is it necessary that you should sacrifice any portion of your feminine delicacy by diving too deep, or approaching too near the professor's chair. A slight knowledge of science in general is all which is here recommended, so far as it may serve to obviate some of those groundless and irrational fears, which arise out of mistaken apprehensions of the phenomena of nature and art; but, above all, to enlarge our views of the great and glorious attributes of the Creator, as exhibited in the most sublime, as well as the most insignificant, works of his creation.

Perhaps one of the lowest advantages, and I am far from thinking it a low one either,

which is derived by women from a general knowledge of science, is, that it renders them more companionable to men. If they are solicitous to charm the nobler sex by their appearance, dress, and manners, surely it is of more importance to interest them by their conversation. By the former they may please; by the latter they may influence, and that to the end of their lives. Yet, how is it possible to interest by their conversation, without some understanding of the subjects which chiefly occupy the minds of men? Most kindly, however, has it been accorded by man to his feeble sister, that it should not be necessary for her to *talk much*, even on his favorite topics, in order to obtain his favor. An attentive listener is generally all that he requires; but in order to listen attentively, and with real interest, it is highly important that we should have considerable understanding of the subject discussed; for the interruption of a single foolish or irrelevant question, the evidence of a wandering thought, the constrained attitude of attention, or the rapid response which conveys no proof of having received an idea, are each sufficient to break the charm, and destroy the satisfaction which most men feel in conversing with really intelligent women.

It is also worth some attention to this subject, if we can thereby dispel many of the idle fears which occupy and perplex the female mind. I have known women who were quite as much afraid of a gun when it was not loaded, as when it was; others who thought a steam-engine as likely to explode when it was not working, as when it was; and others still, who avowedly considered thunder more dangerous than lightning. Now, to say nothing of the irritation which fears like these are apt to occasion in minds of a more masculine order, it is surely no insignificant attainment to acquire a habit of feeling at ease, when there is really nothing to be afraid of.

But, far beyond this, the use of science is to teach us not to

"Wrong thee, mighty Nature!
With whom adversity is but transition;"

and higher still, to teach us how the wisdom and goodness of God pervade all creation. Women are too much accustomed to look at the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms with eyes that may almost literally be said not to see. An insect is to them a little troublesome thing, which flies or creeps; a flower is a petty ornament, with a sweet perfume; and a mine of coal or copper, something which they read about in their geography, as belonging to Newcastle or Wales. I do not say that their actual knowledge is thus limited; but that they are too much in the habit of regarding these portions of the creation as such, and no more.

Chemistry, too, is apt to be considered by young women as far too elaborate and masculine a study to engage their attention; and thus they are satisfied, not only to go on through life unacquainted with those wonderful combinations and properties, which in some of the most familiar things would throw light upon their real nature, and proper use; but also to remain unenlightened in that noblest school of knowledge, which teaches the sublime truth, that the wonder-working power of God has been employed upon all the familiar, as well as the astonishing objects we perceive; and that the same power continues to be exemplified in their perpetual creation, their order, adaptation, and use.

Chiefly, however, would I recommend to the attention of youth, an intimate acquaintance with the nature and habits of the animal world. Here we may find a source of rational and delightful interest, which can never fail us, so long as a bird is heard to sing upon the trees, or a butterfly is seen to sport among the flowers.

I will not go the length of recommending to my young countrywomen to become collectors, either of animals or of insects; because, as in the case of translations from the best of ancient writers, this has already been done for them, better than they are likely to do it for themselves; and because I am not quite sure, that simply for our own amusement, and without any reference to serving the purpose of science, we have a right to

make even a beetle struggle to death upon the point of a pin, or to crowd together boxes full of living creatures, who, in the agony of their pent-up sufferings, devour and destroy one another.

Happily for us, there are ably written books on these subjects, from which we can learn more than from our own observation; and museums accessible to all, where different specimens of insects, and other animals, are so arranged as materially to assist in understanding their nature and classification; and far more congenial it surely must be to the heart and mind of woman, to read all which able and enlightened men have told us of this world of wonder, and then to go forth into the fields, and see the busy and beautiful creatures by which it is inhabited, sporting in the joyous freedom of nature, unharmed, and unsuspicious of harm. Yes, there is an acquaintance with the animal creation, which might be cultivated, so as to do good to the heart, both of the child and the philosopher—an acquaintance which seems to absolve these helpless creatures from the curse of estrangement from their sovereign man—an acquaintance which brings them near to us in all their natural peculiarities, their amazing instincts, and in the voiceless, and otherwise unintelligible secrets of their mysterious existence.

And it is good to be thus acquainted with that portion of creation which acknowledges, in common with ourselves, the great principle of animal life, to know that enjoyment is enjoyment, and that pain is pain, to myriads and myriads of beings, in some respects more beautiful, in others more curious, and in all more innocent, than ourselves. It is good to know, so far as men can know, for what purpose Almighty power has created them. It is good to behold their beauty, to understand their wonderful formation, and to examine the fairy fancy-work of some of their sacred little homes. It is good to be acquainted with the strength of the mother's love, when she stoops her wing to the spoiler, and offers her own life to save her tender brood. It is good to know that the laws of nature, in

their filial and parental influences, cannot be violated without sorrow as intense, though not as lasting, as that which tortures the human heart on the separation of parent and child. It is good to know how these creatures, placed by Divine wisdom under the power and dominion of man, are made to suffer or to die when he neglects or abuses them.

The earth and the air, the woods and the streams, the gardens and the fields, tell us of all this. When we sit under the shade of a lofty tree, in the stillness of summer's balmy noon, the note of the wood pigeon salutes us from above. We look up, and the happy couple are nestling on a bough, as closely, side by side, as if the whole world to them was nothing, so long as their faithful love was left. On a lower branch of the same tree, or on a broken rail close by, the little robin sits and sings, looking occasionally askance into the face of that lordly creature whom instinct teaches him to shun. Yet is it less a reproachful, than an inquiring glance, as if he would ask, whether you could really wish to frighten him with all the terrors which agitate his little breast on your approach. And then he sings to you again, a low soft warble; though his voice is never quite so sweet as in the autumn, when other birds are silent, and he still sings on amidst the falling leaves and faded flowers. Next, the butterfly comes wavering into sight, yet hastening on to turn its golden wings once more up to the sunshine. The bee then hurries past, intent upon its labors, and attracted only for a moment by the nosegay in your hand; while the grasshopper, that master of ventriloquism, invites your curiosity—now here, now there, but never to the spot where his real presence is to be found. And all this while, the faithful dog is at your feet. If you rise, at the same moment he rises too; and if you sit down, he also composes himself to rest. Ever ready to go, or stay, he watches your slightest movement; and so closely and mysteriously is his being absorbed in yours, that, although a ramble in the fields affords him a perfect ecstasy of delight,

he never allows himself this indulgence, without your countenance and companionship.

But it is impossible so much as to name one in a thousand of the sweet and cheering influences of animal life upon the youthful heart. The very atmosphere we live in teems with it; the woods are vocal—the groves are filled with it; while around our doors, within our homes, and even at our social hearth, the unfailing welcome, the transient glimpses of intelligence, the instinct, the love of these creatures, are interwoven with the vast chain of sympathy, which, through the whole of what may be a wandering and uncertain life, binds us to that spot of earth where we first awoke to a feeling of companionship with this portion of the creatures of our heavenly Father's care.

Nor must we forget the wonderful and mysterious affection which some animals are capable of feeling for man. Often as we may have failed to inspire the love we have sought for among our fellow-creatures, we are all capable of inspiring attachment here; nor does the fact of our being unattractive, or comparatively worthless among mankind, operate in the slightest degree to our disadvantage with this class of beings. Witness the outcast from society—the wanderer on the public roads—the poor and houseless mendicant; he still has his dog—yes, and he bears the cold repulse he meets with when he asks for bread, better than he could bear the desertion of that faithful animal: but he fears it not. The proud may pass him by unheeded, the rich may spurn him from their doors, the vulgar and the unfeeling may make a mockery of his rags and wretchedness; but when the stormy night comes on, and he seeks the almost roofless shed to rest his weary limbs, he is followed even there by one friend, who creeps beside him with a love as watchful and as true as if he shared the silken couch of luxury and ease.

There are little motherless children, too, and others not unacquainted with a feeling of almost orphan solitude, who have felt, at times, how the affection of a dumb animal could supply the disappointed yearnings of a

young warm heart. In after life, we may learn to look upon these creatures with respect, because our heavenly Father has thought them worthy of his care; but youth is the season when we love them for their own sakes; and because we then discover that they can be made, by kindness, to love us. In youth alone can we feel to unite them with ourselves in that bond of sympathy, which will never afterwards allow us to treat their sufferings with indifference, or to regard their happiness as beyond the sphere of our duty to promote.

Here, then, the law of love is made to operate through innumerable channels of sweet and natural feeling, extending over a wide field of creation, and reaping its reward of satisfaction wherever a poor animal is rescued from oppression, hunger, or pain.

The study of natural history is, perhaps, the most congenial pursuit to which the mind of youth can be introduced; and it never can begin with this too soon. The history and nature of plants is the next most pleasing study—though far inferior to the first, for this important reason: our acquaintance with animals involves a moral feeling,—and not one feeling only, but a vast chain of sympathies and affections, which, if not touched in early life, are seldom afterwards called forth with any degree of earnestness or warmth; and for a woman to be insensible or indifferent to the happiness of the brute creation, is an idea too repulsive to be dwelt upon for a moment.

There is, however, a sickly sensibility indulged in by some young ladies, which I should be the last to recommend. Many, for instance, will nurse and fondle animals, without ever taking the trouble to feed them. Others shrink away with loathing at the sight of pain, which, if they would but exert themselves to remove, might easily be remedied. I remember a young girl with whom I was well acquainted, having watched a cat torment a mouse until she could bear it no longer, when at last, with a feeling of the utmost repugnance to the act, she snatched up the poor lacerated mouse, and killed it in a

moment. On seeing her do this, two very delicate and estimable young ladies gave themselves up to shrieks and hysterics, although they had known for the previous half hour that the little helpless animal had been enduring the most cruel torture in the claws of the cat, and they had borne this knowledge with the greatest composure.

It is not, then, a delicate shrinking from the mere sight of pain, which constitutes that kindly feeling towards the animal creation, that forms so estimable a part of the female character; but that expansive sentiment of benevolence towards all the creatures of God's formation, which is founded on the principle of love, and which operates as a principle in prompting us to promote the good of all creatures that have life, and to promote it on the widest possible scale.

But to return to the subject of botany. A woman who does not love flowers, suffers a great want in her supplies of healthy and natural enjoyment. How could the poet Milton, when he pictured woman in her highest state of excellence, have employed our mother Eve, had he made her indifferent to the beauty of the plants of paradise, or negligent of the flowers which bloomed around her? Still, I must acknowledge that there is, to many minds, something the reverse of attractive in the first aspect of the study of botany, as it is generally presented to our attention. In this I am supported by one of the most gifted of modern authors, when he speaks of the "ponderous nomenclature" of botany having frightened many a youthful student back from the portals of this study. There are many persons now advanced in life, who deeply regret their want of what is called a taste for botany, when the fault has not been in their natural taste, so much as in the form under which this study was introduced to their notice in youth; and thus they have been shut out through the whole of life, from the pleasure of expatiating in a field, as boundless in its extent as inexhaustible in its attractions.

These difficulties, however, are not insurmountable to all; and youth is unquestiona-

bly the season for forming an intimate acquaintance with this, the loveliest aspect of nature ; so that in after life, when duties are more imperative, and occupations more serious, and there is consequently less time for minute investigation, every flower and every plant may be met as a member of a well-known family, and, as such, bear somewhat of the character of a familiar friend.

It is the same with every part of the creation, whether natural history, or botany, or geology, have occupied our attention, or chemistry, or electricity, that great mystery of the visible world, whose all-powerful agency, the most sublime as well as the most insignificant phenomena of nature are daily and hourly tending to develop—an early and intimate acquaintance with each and all of these, must so far enlighten and enlarge the mind, as to lead our thoughts beyond the narrow limits of material existence, up to that higher region of wonder and of love, where to behold is to admire—to feel is to adore.

From the consideration of the different advantages arising from such studies as it is important should be pursued at an early period of life, we are necessarily led to ask, "What is the use of KNOWLEDGE in general?"

Nothing can well be more vague than the notions popularly entertained of the meaning of knowledge. Dr. Johnson has called it "general illumination of mind." But, if I might be allowed to do so, I should prefer restricting my use of the word knowledge, to that acquaintance with facts, which, in connection with the proper exercise of a healthy mind, will necessarily lead to general illumination. A knowledge of the world, therefore, as I propose to use the expression, must consequently mean, a knowledge of such facts as the general habits of society develop.

This is universally allowed to be a dangerous knowledge, because it cannot be acquired without the risk of being frequently deceived by the false aspect which society assumes, and the still greater risk of having our moral being too deeply absorbed in the

interest and excitement which the study itself affords. No one can obtain a knowledge of the world, by being a mere spectator. It is, therefore, safer and happier to leave this study until the judgment is more matured, and the habits and principles more formed ; or rather I should say, to leave it as a study altogether. Time and experience teach us all it is necessary to know on this subject ; and even duty urges us forward on the theatre of life, when little enough prepared for the temptations and the conflicts we must there encounter. By absolute necessity, then, we acquire as much knowledge of the world as any rational being needs desire, and that is just sufficient to enable us to judge of the consequences of certain principles, or modes of action, as they operate upon the well-being of individuals, and of society at large. Destitute of this degree of worldly knowledge, we must ever be liable to make the most serious mistakes in applying the principle of benevolence, in forming our estimate of the moral condition of mankind, as well as in regulating our scale of social and relative duty.

A general knowledge of the political and social state of the country in which we live, and indeed of all countries, is of great importance, not only to men, but to women. Nor let my fair readers be startled when I speak of the political state of countries. You have been accustomed to make history your study. An acquaintance with the most important eras in history is considered an essential part of a female education. And can it be less essential to know what events are taking place in your own times, than what transpired in past ages ? Do not, however, misunderstand me on this important subject. Do not suppose it would add any embellishment to your conversation, for you to discuss what are called politics, simply as such, especially when, as in nine cases out of ten, you do not really understand what you are talking about. Do not take up any question as belonging to *your* side, or *your* party, while ignorant what the principles of that party are. Above all, do not allow yourself

to grow warm in your advocacy of any particular candidate for a seat in parliament, because he is a handsome man or has made a fine speech. All this may supply an opposite party with food for scandal, or for jest, but has nothing at all to do with that patriotic and deep feeling of interest in the happiness and prosperity of her own country, which a benevolent and enlightened woman must naturally entertain.

Destitute as some women are of every spark of this feeling, it is but natural that their conversation should at times be both trifling and vapid; and that when subjects of general importance are discussed, they should be too much occupied with a pattern of worsted work, even to listen.

I one day heard a very accomplished and amiable young lady lamenting that she had nothing to talk about, except a subject which had been playfully forbidden. "Talk about the probability of a war," said I. "Why should I talk about that?" she replied. "It is nothing to me whether there is war or not." Now, this was said in perfect sincerity, and yet the lady was a Christian woman, and one who would have been very sorry to be suspected of not knowing the *dates* of most of the great battles recorded in history.

I am perfectly aware that there are intricate questions, brought before our senate, which it may require a masculine order of intellect fully to understand. But there are others which may, and ought to engage the attention of every female mind, such as the extinction of slavery, the abolition of war in general, cruelty to animals, the punishment of death, temperance, and many more, on which, neither to know, nor to feel, is almost equally disgraceful.

I must again observe, it is by no means necessary that we should *talk much* on these subjects, even if we do understand them; but to listen attentively, and with real interest when they are discussed by able and liberal-minded men, is an easy and agreeable method of enlarging our stock of valuable knowledge; and, by doing this when we are young, we shall go on with the tide of public events, so

as to render ourselves intelligent companions in old age; and when the bloom of youth is gone, and even animal spirits decline, we shall have our conversation left, for the entertainment and the benefit of our friends.

For my own part, I know of no interest more absorbing, than that with which we listen to a venerable narrator of by-gone facts—facts which have transpired under the actual observation of the speaker, in which he took a part, or which stirred the lives, and influenced the conduct, of those by whom he was surrounded. When such a person has been a lover of sterling truth, and a close observer of things as they really were in early youth, his conversation is such as sages listen to, and historians make the theme of their imperishable pages. Yet, such a companion every woman is capable of becoming; and since old age is not rich in its attractions, is it not well worthy the attention of youth, to endeavor to lay up, as a provision for the future, such sterling materials for rational and lasting interest?

It is worthy of observation, however, that such information can never be of half the value when collected in a vague and indefinite form. The lover of sterling truth alone is able to render the relation of facts of any real value. The mere story-teller, who paints the truth in his own colors, may amuse for an evening; but unless we choose truth—absolute truth, as our companion in early life, the foundation of our opinions, as well as of our principles, will be ever liable to give way. We must, therefore, cultivate a willingness to see things as they really are. Not as our friends do, or as our enemies do not see them; but simply as they are, and, as such, to speak of them, without the bias of party feeling, or the coloring of our own selfishness.

The local customs of the place in which we live, and the habits of thinking of the persons with whom we associate, will naturally, in the course of time, produce considerable effect upon our own views. But in youth, the mind is free to choose, open to conviction, uninfluenced by prejudice, and comparatively unoccupied by previous impressions. It

is, therefore, of the utmost importance, in this early stage of life, to cultivate that love of truth which will enable us to see every object as it really is, and to see it clearly; for there are vague impressions, and indefinite perceptions, which create in the mind a succession of shapeless images, as perplexing in their variety, as they are uncertain in their form.

Of persons whose minds are thus occupied, it can scarcely be said that they love the truth, because they seldom endeavor to ascertain what the truth is; and their consequent deviations from the exact line of rectitude in thought and action, brings upon them, not unfrequently, the charge of falsehood, when they have all the while been true to the image floating before them, but which assumed a different character as often as interest or inclination clothed it in fresh colors.

Vague and uncertain habits of thinking and talking in early life, almost necessarily lead to false conclusions; nor is it the least part of the evil, that those who indulge them are extremely difficult to correct when wrong, or rather when not exactly right; because conviction cannot be proved upon uncertainty. All we can say of such persons is, that they are as little wrong as right. We cannot help them. They are perpetually falling into difficulties, and, so long as they live, will be liable to incur the suspicion of falsehood.

That a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, may be proved by the observation of every day. A little knowledge is generally more talked about than a great deal—more dragged forward into notice, and, in short, more gloried in by its possessor. We will take, as an instance, the subject of phrenology. Dabblers in this study who like the eclat of pronouncing upon the characters of their neighbors, as discovered through that opaque medium, the skull, are not a little pleased to entertain themselves and others with the phraseology of Gall and Spurzheim; while, with an air of oracular wisdom, they tell how this person is covetous, another prone to kill, a third fond of music, and a fourth in the habit of making comparisons. Now, although

a correct knowledge of the exact situation of these different organs in the head, is more difficult to attain than most young persons are aware of; yet, even this part of the study is mere play, when compared with that exercise of mind, which alone would justify any one, even the profoundest philosopher, in pronouncing upon individual character, according to the principles of phrenology. Would any of these fair oracles, for instance, be kind enough to tell us what would be the result, in summing up the elements of human character, where there was an extraordinary development of combativeness, connected with half as much benevolence, nine-tenths of the same amount of hope, one-third of self-esteem, three-fourths of causality, and one-third of constructiveness. And yet, calculations as intricate, as minute, and far more extensive than this, must be entered into, before the science of phrenology, however true, can enable any individual to pronounce upon the character of another.

And thus it is throughout. A little knowledge makes people talk, a little more induces them to think; and women, from the careless and superficial manner in which their studies are frequently carried on, are but too apt to be found among the class of talkers. But let us pause a moment, to inquire whether the smallness of their stock of knowledge is really the cause why it is sometimes so unnecessarily brought forward. Is not the evil of a deeper nature? and may it not arise from false notions popularly entertained respecting the real use of knowledge? I will not say there are any women who absolutely *believe* that the use of knowledge is to supply them with something to talk about; but are we not warranted in suspecting that this is the rule by which the value of knowledge is too frequently estimated?

Now, one simple view of this subject might settle the question at once, as to the desirableness, or even utility, of women bringing forward their knowledge for the purpose of display. It so happens, that few of our sex, under ordinary circumstances, have an opportunity of acquiring as much general know-

ledge as a man of common attainments, or even as a mere boy. If we mix in country circles, the village schoolmaster has stores of knowledge far beyond our own; and in the society of towns, the man of business, nay, even the mechanic, knows more than we do. The nature of their employments, the associations they form, and the subjects which engage their attention, all tend to give to the minds of men in general, a clearness of understanding on certain points, and an acquaintance with important facts, beyond what is possessed by one woman in a thousand; though, at the same time, women have a vast advantage over them in this respect, that the liveliness and facility of their intellectual powers enable them to invest with interest many of the inferior and less important topics of conversation.

General knowledge, however, is not less important to them, than to men, in the effect it produces upon their own minds and feelings. A well-informed woman may generally be known, not so much by what she tells you, as by what she does not tell you; for she is the last to take pleasure in mere gossip, or to make vulgar allusions to the appearance, dress, or personal habits, of her friends and neighbors. Her thoughts are not in these things. The train of her reflections goes not along with the eating, drinking, visiting, or scandal, of the circle in which she moves. She has a world of interest beyond her local associations; and while others are wondering what is the price of her furniture, or where she bought her watch, she, perhaps, is mentally solving that important question, whether civilization ever was extinguished in a Christian country.

Nor is it merely to be able to say, when asked, in what year any particular sovereign reigned, that knowledge is worth acquiring. Its highest use is to be able to assist on all occasions in the establishment of truth, by a clear statement of facts; to say what experience has proved; and to overcome prejudice by just reasoning. It enables us also to take expansive views of every subject upon which our minds can be employed, so as

never to argue against general principles, from opposite impressions produced merely upon our own minds.

As a further illustration of this narrow kind of reasoning, we will suppose a case. A well-meaning, but ignorant man, derives a considerable income from a sugar plantation in the West Indies, by which he supports a number of poor relations. He argues thus—"If slavery be abolished, it will injure my profits; and I shall no longer be able to support my relations. It is good that I should exercise my benevolent feelings through this channel; consequently, the slave-trade must also be good. I will, therefore, neither vote for the abolition of slavery, nor give my countenance to those who do." A more truly enlightened man, though no more influenced by kindly feeling, would know, that it must always be right to uphold right principles, and that God may safely be trusted with the consequences to ourselves.

Nor is it from our own personal feelings alone, that we become liable to this perversion of judgment, with regard to things in general. Prejudice has ever been found more infectious than the plague, and scarcely less fatal. We hear our friends speak warmly on subjects we do not understand. They argue vehemently, and our minds, from want of knowledge, are open to receive as truth, the greatest possible absurdities, which, in our turn, we embrace and defend, until they become more dear to us than truth itself. The probable conclusion is, that in the course of time, we prefer to remain in error, rather than be convinced that we have all the while been wrong. Thus, it is often ignorance alone which lays the foundation of many of those serious mistakes in opinion and conduct, for which we have to bear all the blame, and suffer all the consequences, of moral culpability.

Want of general knowledge is also a very sufficient reason why some persons, when they mix in good society, live in a state of perpetual fear lest their deficiencies should be found out. Theirs is not that amiable modesty which arises from a sense of the

superiority of others ; for to admire our friends, or even our fellow-creatures, is always a pleasurable sensation ; while a conviction of our own ignorance of such topics as are generally interesting in good society, carries with it a feeling of disgraceful humiliation, perfectly incompatible with enjoyment. Uneasiness, timidity, and shyness, with an awkward shrinking from every office of responsibility, or post of distinction, are the unavoidable accompaniments of this conviction ; and from this cause, how many opportunities of extending our sphere of usefulness are lost ! How many opportunities of rational and lawful enjoyment, too, especially if, from a consciousness of our own inferiority, we refuse to associate with persons of better information and more enlightened minds. Our sufferings are then of a twofold nature, arising from a sense of mortification at our loss, and from the fretfulness and irritation of temper which such privations naturally occasion.

It is well, too, if envy does not steal in to poison the little comfort we might otherwise have left—well if we do not look with evil eye upon the higher attainments of our friends—well if, while we professedly admire, we do not throw out some hint that may tend to diminish their value in the estimation of others.

Thus, there is no end to that culpable want of knowledge, which must be the consequence of an idle or wasted youth. We may, and we necessarily must, learn much in after years by experience, observation, reading, and conversation. But we are then, perhaps, in middle age, only acquiring a bare knowledge of those facts which ought, in by-gone years, to have been forming our judgment, fixing our principles, and supplying our minds with intellectual food.

If there is no calculation to be made of the evils arising from a want of knowledge, as little can we estimate the amount of good, of which knowledge lays the foundation. Perhaps one of its greatest recommendations to a woman, is the tendency it has to diffuse a calm over the ruffled spirit, and to supply subjects of interesting reflection, under cir-

cumstances the least favorable to the acquisition of new ideas.

Such is the position in society which many estimable women are called to fill, that unless they have stored their minds with general knowledge during the season of youth, they never have the opportunity of doing so again. How valuable, then, is such a store, to draw upon for thought, when the hand throughout the day is busily employed, and sometimes when the head is also weary ! It is then that knowledge not only sweetens labor, but often, when the task is ended, and a few social friends are met together, it comes forth unbidden, in those glimpses of illumination which a well-informed, intelligent woman, is able to strike out of the humblest material. It is then that, without the slightest attempt at display, her memory helps her to throw in those apt allusions, which clothe the most familiar objects in borrowed light, and make us feel, after having enjoyed her society, as if we had been introduced to a new, and more intellectual existence than we had enjoyed before.

It is impossible for an ignorant, and consequently a short-sighted, prejudiced woman, to exercise this influence over us. We soon perceive the bounds of the narrow circle within which she reasons, with self ever in the centre ; we detect the opinions of others, in her own ; and we feel the vulgarity with which her remarks may turn upon ourselves, the moment we are gone.

How different is the enjoyment, the repose we feel in the society of a well-informed woman, who has acquired in early youth the habit of looking beyond the little affairs of every-day existence—of looking from matter to mind—from action to principle—from time to eternity ! The gossip of society, that many-toned organ of discord, seldom reaches her ; even slander, which so often slays the innocent, she is in many cases able to disarm. Under all the little crosses and perplexities which necessarily belong to household care, she is able to look calmly at their comparative insignificance, and thus they can never disturb her peace ; while in all the pleasures of

intellectual and social intercourse, it is her privilege to give as bountifully as she receives.

It must not be supposed that the writer is one who would advocate, as essential to woman, any very extraordinary degree of intellectual attainment, especially if confined to one particular branch of study. "I should like to excel in something," is a frequent, and, to some extent, laudable expression; but in what does it originate, and to what does it tend? To be able to do a great many things tolerably well, is of infinitely more value to a woman, than to be able to excel in one. By the former, she may render herself generally useful; by the latter, she may dazzle for an hour. By being apt, and tolerably well skilled in every thing, she may fall into any situation in life with dignity and ease—by devoting her time to excellence in one, she may remain incapable of every other.

So far as cleverness, learning, and knowledge are conducive to woman's moral excellence, they are therefore desirable, and no further. All that would occupy her mind to the exclusion of better things, all that would involve her in the mazes of flattery and admiration, all that would tend to draw away her thoughts from others and fix them on herself, ought to be avoided as an evil to her, however brilliant or attractive it may be in itself.

CHAPTER IV.

MUSIC, PAINTING, AND POETRY

As a picture which presents to the eye of the beholder those continuous masses of light and shade usually recognised under the characteristic of breadth, though it may be striking, and sometimes even sublime in its effect, yet, without the more delicate touches of art, must ever be defective in the pleasure it affords; so the female character, though invested with high intellectual endowments, must ever fail to charm, without at least a taste for music, painting, or poetry.

The first of these requires no recommendation in the present day. Indeed, the danger is, that the fair picture which woman's character ought to present, should be broken up into that confusion of petty lights and shades, which, in the phraseology of paintings, is said to destroy its effect as a whole. May we not carry on the similitude still further, and compare the more important intellectual endowments of human character to the broad lights and massive shadows of a picture; music, to the richness and variety of its coloring; painting, to correctness and beauty of its outline; and poetry, to general harmony of the whole, consisting chiefly in the aerial or atmospheric tints which convey the idea of morning, noon, or evening, a storm, a calm, or any of the seasons of the year; with all the varied associations which belong to each.

I have said that music requires no recommendation in the present day, when to play like a professor ranks among the highest attainments of female education. Since, then, music is so universally regarded both by the wise and good, not only as lawful, but desirable, it remains to be considered under what circumstances the practice of it may be expedient or otherwise.

In the first place, "Have you what is called an ear for music?" If you are not annoyed by discord, nor made to suffer pain by a false note, nor disturbed by errors in time, let no persuasion ever induce you to touch the keys of a piano, or the chords of a harp again.

Perhaps you may reply, "But I am so fond of music." I question it not: for though difficult to be accounted for, many persons, who have no ear, are fond of music. Yet, why not, under such circumstances, be content to be a listener for the rest of your lives, and thankful that there are others differently constituted, who are able to play for your amusement, and who play with ease in a style superior to what you would have attained by any amount of labor? All have not the same natural gifts. You, in your turn, may excel in something else; but as well might an automaton be made to dance, as a woman destitute of taste for music, be

taught to play with any hope of attaining excellence, or even of giving pleasure to her friends. It is possible that by an immense expenditure of time and money, a wooden figure might be so constructed, to dance so as to take the proper steps at the right time ; but the grace, the ease, indeed all that gives beauty to the movements of the dancer, must certainly be wanting. It is thus with music. By a fruitless waste of time and application, the hand may acquire the habit of touching the right keys ; but all which constitutes the soul of music must be wanting to that performance, where the ear is not naturally attuned to "the concord of sweet sounds."

It is a good thing to be a pleased and attentive listener, even in music. And far happier sometimes is the unpretending girl, who sits apart silently listening to another's voice, than any one of the anxious group of candidates for promotion to the music-stool, whose countenances occasionally display the conflicting emotions of hope and fear, triumph and disappointment.

There are, however, among men, and women too, certain individuals whose souls may be said to be imbued with music as an instinct. It forms a part of their existence, and they only live entirely in an atmosphere of sound. To such it would be a cold philosophy to teach the expediency of giving up the cultivation of music altogether, because of the temptations it involves ; and yet to such individuals, above all others, music is the most dangerous. To them it may be said, that, like charity, though in a widely different sense, it *covers a multitude of sins* ; for such is its influence over them, that while carried away by its allurements, they scarcely see or feel like moral agents, so as to distinguish good from evil ; and thus they mistake for an intellectual, nay, even sometimes for a spiritual enjoyment, the indulgence of that passion, which is but too earthly in its associations.

I will not say that music is a species of intoxication, but I do think that an inordinate love of it may be compared to intemperance, in the fact of its inciting the passions of the human mind so much more frequently to evil

than to good. We are warranted by the language of Scripture to believe, that music is a powerfully pervading principle in the universe of God. The harmony of the spheres is figuratively set forth under the idea of the *morning stars singing together*, and the Apocalyptic vision abounds with allusions to celestial choirs. Indeed, so perfectly in unison is music with our ideas of intense and elevated enjoyment, that we can scarcely imagine heaven without the hymning of the praises of the Most High by the voices of angels and happy spirits. But let it be remembered, that all this is in connection with a purified state of being. It is where the serpent sin has never entered, or after he has been destroyed. So long as the evil heart is unsubdued—so long as there are desperate passions to awaken—so long as the hand of man is raised against his brother—so long as the cup of riotous indulgence continues to be filled—so long as temptation lurks beneath the rose-leaves of enjoyment, music will remain to be a dangerous instrument in the hands of those who are by nature and by constitution its willing and devoted slaves.

Even to such, however, I would fain believe, that when kept under proper restrictions, and regulated by right principles, music may have its use. There can be no need to advise such persons to cultivate, when young, their talent for music. The danger is, that they will cultivate no other.

Between these individuals, and the persons first described, there is a numerous class of human beings, of whom it may be said, that they possess by nature a *little* taste for music ; and to these the cultivation of it may be desirable, or otherwise, according to their situation in life, and the views they entertain of the use of accomplishments in general. If the use of accomplishments be to make a show of them in society, then a *little* skill in music is certainly not worth its cost. But if the object of a daughter is to soothe the weary spirit of a father when he returns home from the office or the counting-house, where he has been toiling for her maintenance ; to beguile a mother of her cares ; or to charm

a suffering sister into forgetfulness of her pain ; then a very little skill in music may often be made to answer as noble a purpose as a great deal ; and never does a daughter appear to more advantage, than when she cheerfully lays aside a fashionable air, and strums over, for more than the hundredth time, some old ditty which her father loves. To her ear it is possible it may be altogether divested of the slightest charm. But of what importance is that ? The old man listens until tears are glistening in his eyes, for he sees again the home of his childhood—he hears his father's voice—he feels his mother's welcome—all things familiar to his heart in early youth come back to him with that long remembered strain ; and, happiest thought of all ! they are revived by the playful fingers of his own beloved child. The brother too—the prodigal—the alien from the paths of peace ; in other lands, that fireside music haunts his memory. The voice of the stranger has no melody for him. His heart is chilled. He says, “ I will arise and go to my father's home,” where a welcome, a heart-warm welcome, still awaits him. Yet so wide has been the separation, that a feeling of estrangement still remains, and neither words, nor looks, nor affectionate embraces can make the past come back unshadowed, or dispel the cloud which settles upon every heart. The sister feels this. She knows the power of music, and when the day is closing in, that first strange day of partial reconciliation, she plays a low soft air. Her brother knows it well. It is the evening hymn they used to sing together in childhood, when they had been all day gathering flowers. His manly voice is raised. Once more it mingles with the strain. Once more the parents and the children, the sister and the brother, are united as in days gone by.

It requires no extraordinary skill in execution to render music subservient to the purposes of social and domestic enjoyment ; but it does require a willing spirit, and a feeling mind, to make it tell upon the sympathies and affections of our nature.

There is a painful spectacle occasionally

exhibited in private life, when a daughter refuses to play for the gratification of her own family, or casts aside with contempt the music they prefer ; yet when a stranger joins the circle, and especially when many guests are met, she will sit down to the piano with the most obliging air imaginable, and play with perfect good-will whatever air the company may choose. What must the parents of such a daughter feel, if they recollect the fact, that it was at their expense their child acquired this pleasing art, by which she appears anxious to charm any one but them ? And how does the law of love operate with her ? Yet, music is the very art, which by its mastery over the feelings and affections, calls forth more tenderness than any other. Surely, then, the principle of love ought to regulate the exercise of this gift, in proportion to its influence upon the human heart. Surely, it ought not to be cultivated as the medium of display, so much as the means of home enjoyment ; not so much as a spell to charm the stranger, or one who has no other link of sympathy with us, as a solace to those we love, and a tribute of gratitude and affection to those who love us.

With regard to the application and use of the art of painting, or perhaps we ought to say drawing, there is a very serious mistake generally prevailing among young persons, as well as among some who are more advanced in life. Drawing, as well as music, is not only considered as something to entertain company with, but its desirableness as an art is judged of precisely by the estimate which is formed of those pieces of polished pasteboard brought home from school, and exhibited as specimens of genius in the delineation of gothic arches, ruined cottages, and flowers as flat and dry as the paper on which they are painted. The use of drawing, in short, is almost universally judged of among young ladies, by what it enables them to produce ; and no wonder, when such are the productions, that its value should be held rather cheap.

It has often been said with great truth, that the first step towards excellence in the

art of drawing, is to learn to *see*; and certainly, nothing can be more correct than that the quickening of the powers of observation, the habit of regarding, not only the clear outline, but the relative position of objects, with the extension of the sphere of thought which is thus obtained, is of infinitely more value in forwarding the great work of intellectual advancement, than all the actual productions of female artists since the world began.

There are many very important reasons why drawing should be especially recommended to the attention of young persons, and I am the more anxious to point them out, because, among the higher circles of society, it appears to be sinking into disrepute, in comparison with music. Among such persons, it is beginning to be considered as a sort of handicraft, or as something which artists can do better than ladies. In this they are perfectly right; but how then are they to reap the advantage to themselves, which I am about to describe as resulting from an attentive cultivation of the graphic art?

Among these advantages, I will begin with the least. It is quiet. It disturbs no one; for however defective the performance may be, it does not necessarily, like music, jar upon the sense. It is true, it may when seen offend the practised eye; but we can always draw in private, and keep our productions to ourselves. In addition to this, it is an employment which beguiles the mind of many cares, because it never can be merely mechanical. The thoughts must go along with it, for the moment the attention wanders, the hand ceases from its operations, owing to the necessity there is that each stroke should be different from any which has previously been made. Under the pressure of anxiety, in seasons of protracted suspense, or when no effort can be made to meet an expected calamity, especially when that calamity is exclusively our own, drawing is of all other occupations the one most calculated to keep the mind from brooding upon self, and to maintain that general cheerfulness which is a part of social and domestic duty.

Drawing, unlike most other arts, may be taken up at any time of life, though certainly with less prospect of success than when it has been pursued in youth. It can also be laid down and resumed, as circumstance or inclination may direct, and that without any serious loss; for while the hand is employed in other occupations, the eye may be learning useful lessons to be worked out on some future day.

But the great, the wonder-working power of the graphic art, is that by which it enables us to behold, as by a new sense of vision, the beauty and the harmony of the creation. Many have this faculty of perception in their nature, who never have been taught, perhaps not allowed, to touch a pencil, and who remain to the end of their lives unacquainted with the rules of painting as an art. To them this faculty affords but glimpses of the ideal, in connection with the real; but to such as have begun to practise the art, by first learning to *see*, each succeeding day unfolds some new scene in that vast picture, which the ever-varying aspect of nature presents. As the faculty of hearing, in the savage Indian is sharpened to an almost incredible degree of acuteness, simply from the frequent need he has for the use of that particular sense; so the eye of the painter, from the habit of regarding every object with reference to its position and effect, beholds ten thousand points of interest, which the unpractised in this art never perceive. There is not a shadow on the landscape, not a gleam of sunshine in the fields, not a leaf in the forest, nor a flower on the lea, not a sail upon the ocean, nor a cloud in the sky, but they all form parts of that unfading picture, upon which his mind perpetually expatiates without satiety or weariness.

It is a frequent complaint with travellers, that they find the scenery around them insipid; but this can never occur to the artist, through whatever country he may roam. A turn in the road, with a bunch of furze on one side, and a stunted oak on the other, is sufficient to arrest his attention, and occupy a page in his sketch-book. A willow brook

in the deep meadows, with cattle grazing on its banks, is the subject of another. The tattered mendicant is a picture, of himself; or the sturdy wagoner with his team, or the solitary orphan sitting in the porch of the village-church. Every group around the door of the inn, every party around the ancient elm in the centre of the hamlet, every beast of burden feeding by the way-side, has to him a beauty and a charm, which his art enables him to revive and perpetuate.

It is the same when he mingles in society. Hundreds and thousands of human beings may pass by the common observer without exciting a single thought or feeling, beyond their relative position with regard to himself. But the painter sees in almost every face a picture. He beholds a grace in almost every attitude, a scene of interest in every group; and, while his eye is caught by the classic beauty of an otherwise insignificant countenance, he arrests it in the position where light and shadow are most harmoniously blended; and, behold! it lives again beneath his touch—another, yet the same.

In every object, however familiar in itself, or unattractive in other points of view, the painter perceives at once what is striking, characteristic, harmonious, or graceful; and thus, while associating in the ordinary affairs of life, he feels himself the inhabitant of a world of beauty, from which others are shut out.

Would that we could dwell with more satisfaction upon this ideal existence, as it affects the morals of the artist's real life! Whatever there may be defective here, however, as regards the true foundation of happiness, is surely not attributable to the art itself; but to the necessity under which too many labor, of courting public favor, and sometimes of sacrificing the dignity of their profession to its pecuniary success.

Nor is it an object of desirable attainment to women in general, that they should study the art of painting to this extent. Amply sufficient for all their purposes, is the habit of drawing from natural objects with correctness and facility. Copying from other draw-

ings, though absolutely necessary to the learner, is but the first step towards those innumerable advantages which arise from an easy and habitual use of the pencil. Yet here how many stop, and think their education in the graphic art complete! They think also, what is most unjust of drawing, that it is only the amusement of an idle hour, incapable of producing any happier result than an exact *fac-simile* of the master's lesson. No wonder, that with such ideas, they should evince so little inclination to continue this pursuit on leaving school. For though it is a common thing to hear young ladies exclaim, how much they should like to sketch from nature, and how much they should like to take likenesses, it is very rarely that we find one really willing to take a hundredth part of the pains which are necessary to the attainment even of mediocrity in either of these departments. That it is in reality easier, and far more pleasant, to sketch from nature, than from another drawing, is allowed by all who have made the experiment on right principles; which, however, few young persons are able to do, because they are so seldom instructed in what, if I might be allowed the expression, I should call the *philosophy* of picture-making, or, in other words, the relation of cause and effect in the grouping and general management of objects, so as to unite a number of parts into a perfect and pleasing whole.

Perspective is the first step in this branch of philosophy, but the nature and effect of light and shade, with the proportions and relations of different objects, and harmony, that grand feature of beauty, must all have become subjects of interest and observation, before we can hope to sketch successfully; and especially, before we can derive that high degree of intellectual enjoyment from the art of painting, which it is calculated to afford. Yet all these, by close and frequent attention, may be learned from nature itself, though an early acquaintance with the rules of art will greatly assist the understanding in this school of philosophy.

Among the numerous mistakes made by

young people on the subject of drawing, none is a greater hindrance to their efforts, than an idea which generally prevails, that not only drawing itself, but each different branch of the art, requires a natural genius for that particular study. Thus, while one excuses herself from drawing because she has no genius for it ; another tells you, that although she can draw landscapes with great facility, she has no genius for heads. Now, if genius be, as Madame de Stael informs us, "enthusiasm operating upon talent," I freely grant that it is essential to success in this, as well as every other art. You must not only learn it, but you must absolutely *love* it, was the frequent expression of a very clever master to his pupil. And it is this very love, which of itself will carry on the young student to any point of excellence, which it is desirable for a woman to attain.

It is true, there are greater difficulties to some than to others ; just as the eye is more or less acute in its perceptions, or the communication between that and the hand more or less easy. Yet, with the same amount of genius and a little more patience, with a little more humility too, for that has more to do with success in painting than the inexperienced are aware of, these difficulties may easily be overcome.

I have said that humility is necessary to our success, and it operates precisely in this manner. It always happens that the eye has been in training for observation, long before the hand begins to trace so much as a bare outline of what the eye perceives. Thus, our first attempts at imitation fall so far short, not only of the real, but also of the ideal which the mind retains, that if praise or admiration have had any thing to do with inciting us to draw, the mortification which ensues will probably be more than a young artist can endure. She must, therefore, be humble enough to be willing to proceed without praise, sometimes without commendation, and occasionally with a more than comfortable share of ridicule, as the reward of her first endeavors ; all which might possibly be borne with equanimity, if she did not herself

perceive a fearful want of resemblance to the thing designed.

The practice of drawing the human face and figure, is a sufficient illustration of this fact. For one who succeeds in this branch of drawing, there are twenty who succeed in landscapes ; because, those who fail assure you, it is so much more difficult to draw faces and figures. This statement, however, is altogether unsupported by reason, since it requires just the same use of the eye and the hand, and just the same exercise of the mind, to draw one object as another ; and provided only the object drawn is stationary, it is quite as easy to trace with accuracy the outline of a head, as of a tree, or a mountain.

There is, however, a wide difference in the result. By a slight deviation from the true outline of a mountain, no great injury to the general effect of a landscape is produced ; while the same degree of deviation from the outline of a face, will sometimes entirely destroy, not only the likeness, but the beauty of the whole. Even a branch of a tree, and sometimes a whole tree, may be omitted in a landscape ; but if a nose, or an eye, were found wanting in the drawing of a face, it would be difficult to treat the performance with any thing like gravity.

Thus, then, the vanity of the young students is more severely put to the test in delineations of the human form, than it can be in landscape drawing ; and thus they are apt to say, they have no genius for heads or figures, because their love of excellence, though sufficient for the purposes of landscape drawing, is not strong enough to support them under the mortification of having produced a badly drawn face or figure.

It is not the least among the advantages of drawing, that it induces a habit of perpetually aiming at ideal excellence ; in other words, that it draws the mind away from considering the grosser qualities of matter, to the contemplation of beauty as an abstract idea ; that it gives a definiteness to our notions of objects in general, and enables us to describe, with greater accuracy, the character and appearance of every thing we see.

Nor ought we by any means to overlook the value of that which the pencil actually produces. Sketches of scenery, however defective as works of art, are among the precious memorials of which time, the great destroyer, is unable to deprive us. In them the traveller lives again, through all the joys and sorrows of his distant wanderings. He breathes again the atmosphere of that far world which his eye will never more behold. He treads again the mountain-path where his step was never weary. He sees the sunshine on the snowy peaks which rise no more to him. He hears again the shout of joyous exultation, when it bursts from hearts as young and buoyant as his own; and he remembers, at the same time, how it was with him in those by-gone days, when, for the moment, he was lifted up above the grovelling cares of every-day existence.

But, above all, the art which preserves to us the features of the loved and lost, ought to be cultivated as a means of natural and enduring gratification. It is curious to look back to the portrait of infancy, or even youth, when the same countenance is stamped with the deep traces of experience, when the venerable brow is ploughed with furrows, and the temples are shaded with scattered locks of silvery hair. It is interesting—deeply interesting, to behold the likeness of some distinguished character, with whose mind we have long been acquainted, through the medium of his works; but the beloved countenance, whose every line of beauty was mingled with our young affections, when this can be made to live before us, after death has done his fearful work, and the grave has claimed its own—we may well say, in the language of the poet, of that magic skill which has such power over the past, as to call up buried images, and clothe them again in beauty and in youth,

"Bless'd be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it."

Beyond these, however, there are uses in the art of drawing so well worthy the consid-

eration of every young woman of enlightened mind, that we cannot too earnestly recommend this occupation to their attention, even although it should be at some sacrifice of that labyrinthine toil of endless worsted-work, with which, in the case of modern young ladies, both head and hand appear to be so perseveringly employed. I freely grant the charm there is in weaving together the many tints of *German wool*, but what does this amusement do for the mind, except to keep it quiet, and not always that? Now, the substitute I would propose for this occupation, is equally pleasing in the variety of colors employed, and yet calculated to be highly beneficial in its influence upon the mind, by increasing its store of knowledge, and supplying a perpetual source of rational interest, even at times when the occupation itself cannot well be carried on.

My proposition, then, is this: that, in pursuing the study of botany, instead of the unattractive *hortus siccus*, which pleases no one but the scientific beholder, correct and natural drawings should be made of every specimen, just as it appears when growing, or when freshly gathered. Instead of the colorless, distorted, hot-pressed specimens, which the botanist now displays, to the utter contempt of all uninitiated in his lore, we should then have beautiful and imperishable pictures of graceful, delicate, or curious plants, looking just as they did when the mountain-wind blew over them, or when the woodland stream crept in among their thousand stems, and kissed the drooping blossoms that hung upon its banks. We might then have them placed before us in all their natural loveliness, either the flower, the branch, or the entire plant; and sometimes, to render the picture more complete, the characteristic scenery by which it is usually surrounded.

But if in botany the practice of this art is so desirable, how much more so does it become in entomology, where the study can scarcely be carried on without a sacrifice of life most revolting to the female mind. What beautiful specimens might we not

have of the curious caterpillar, with a branch of the tree on which it feeds ; then the larva and its silken bed ; and lastly, the splendid butterfly, whose expanded wings no cruel touch could ruffle ; all forming pictures of the most interesting and delightful character, and powerfully contrasted in the associations they would excite, with those regular rows of moths and beetles pricked on paper, which our juvenile collectors now exhibit.

It may be said, that even such specimens of insects could scarcely be obtained without some sacrifice of life or liberty ; but we all know that when the eye and the hand are habituated to catch the likeness of any object, it is done with increasing facility each time the experiment is made, until a comparatively slight observation of the general appearance, position, and characteristic features of the living model, is sufficient for the artist in the completion of his likeness.

The same facility of delineation would assist our researches through the whole range of natural history. By such means we should not only be supplied with endless amusement, but might at the same time be adding to our store of useful knowledge. We should not only be making ourselves better acquainted with the poetry of nature, but with its reality too. For what is there, either practical or real, in the specimens of plants and insects as we generally find them ? Real they unquestionably are, in one sense, as the mummy is a real man ; but who would point to that pitiful vestige of mortality as exhibiting the real characteristics of a human being ?

It seems to me a perfectly natural subject of repulsion, when the poet exclaims—

“ Nor would I like to spread
My thin and withered face,
The *hortus siccus*, pale and dead,
A mummy of my race.”

And few there are who would not prefer to such miserable memorials, as actually more real, a well-painted likeness of a departed friend, with the expression of countenance, the dress, the position, and the circumstances with which the memory of that friend was associated.

Drawing is, unfortunately, one of those accomplishments which are too frequently given up at the time of life when they might be most useful to others,—when they might really be turned to good account, in that early expansion and development of mind, which belong exclusively to woman in her maternal capacity ; but as this view of the subject belongs more properly to a later stage of the present work, we will pass on to ask, In what degree of estimation poetry is, and ought to be held, by the daughters of England in the present day ?

There have been eras in our history, when poetry assumed a more than reasonable sway over the female mind ; when an acquaintance with the Muses was considered essential to a polished education, and when the very affectation of poetic feeling proved how high a value was attached to the reality. It would be useless now to speak of the absurdities into which the young and sensitive were often betrayed by this extreme of public taste. Such times are gone by, and the opposite extreme is now the tendency of popular feeling. It is not to be wondered at that this should be the case with men ; because, as a nation, our fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers are becoming more and more involved in the necessity of providing for mere animal existence. No wonder, then, that in our teeming cities poetry should be compelled to hide her diminished head ; or that even, pursuing the man of business home to his suburban villa, she should leave him to his stuffed armchair, in the arms of that heavy, after-dinner sleep, which so frequently succeeds to his short and busy day of unremitting struggle and excitement. Nor is this all. If poetry should seek the quiet fields, as in the days of their pastoral beauty, even from these, her green and flowery haunts, she is scared away by the steaming torrent, the reeking chimney, and the fiery locomotive ; while on the wide ocean, where her ancient realm was undisputed, her silvery trace upon the bosom of the deep waters is now ploughed up by vulgar paddles ; and all the voiceless mystery of “ viewless winds,”

which in the old time held the minds of expectant thousands under their command, is now become a thing of no account—a by-word, or a jest.

I speak not with childish or ignorant repining of these things. We are told by political economists that it is good they should be so, and I presume not to dispute the fact. Yet, surely, if it be the business of man to give up the strength of his body, the energy of his mind, and the repose of his soul, for his country's prosperity or—his own; it is for woman, who labors under no such pressing necessity, to make a stand against the encroachments of this popular tendency,—I had almost said, this national disease.

What is poetry? is a question which has been asked a thousand times, and perhaps never clearly answered. I presume not to suppose my own definition more happy than others; but in a work* already before the public, I have been at some pains to place this subject in a point of view at once clear and attractive. My idea of poetry as explained in this work, and it remains to be the same, is, that it is best understood by that chain of association which connects the intellects with the affections; so that whatever is so far removed from vulgarity, as to excite ideas of sublimity, beauty, or tenderness, may be said to be poetical; though the force of such ideas must depend upon the manner in which they are presented to the mind, as well as to the nature of the mind itself.

When the character of an individual is deeply imbued with poetic feeling, there is a corresponding disposition to look beyond the dull realities of common life, to the ideal relation of things, as they connect themselves with our passions and feelings, or with the previous impressions we have received of loveliness or grandeur, repose or excitement, harmony or beauty, in the universe around us. This disposition, it must be granted, has been in some instances a formidable obstacle to the even tenor of the

wise man's walk on earth; but let us not, while solicitous to avoid the abuse of poetic feeling, rush into the opposite excess of neglecting the high and heaven-born principle altogether.

It is the taste of the present times to invest the material with an immeasurable extent of importance beyond the ideal. It is the tendency of modern education to instil into the youthful mind the necessity of knowing, rather than the advantage of feeling. And, to a certain extent, "knowledge is power;" but neither is knowledge all that we live for, nor power all that we enjoy. There are deep mysteries in the book of nature which all can feel, but none will ever understand, until the veil of mortality shall be withdrawn. There are stirrings in the heart of man which constitute the very essence of his being, and which power can neither satisfy nor subdue. Yet this mystery reveals more truly than the clearest proofs, or mightiest deductions of science, that a master-hand has been for ages, and is still at work, above, beneath, and around us; and this moving principle is forever reminding us, that, in our nature, we inherit the germs of a future existence, over which time has no influence, and the grave no victory.*

If, then, for man it be absolutely necessary that he should sacrifice the poetry of his nature for the realities of material and animal existence, for woman there is no excuse—for woman, whose whole life, from the cradle to the grave, is one of feeling, rather than of action; whose highest duty is so often to suffer, and be still; whose deepest enjoyments are all relative; who has nothing, and is nothing, of herself; whose experience, if unparticipated, is a total blank; yet, whose world of interest is wide as the realm of humanity, boundless as the ocean of life, and enduring as eternity! For woman, who, in her inexhaustible sympathies, can live only in the existence of another, and whose very smiles and tears are not exclusively her own—for woman to cast away the love of poetry,

* The Poetry of Life.

* The Poetry of Life.

is to pervert from their natural course the sweetest and loveliest tendencies of a truly feminine mind, to destroy the brightest charm which can adorn her intellectual character, to blight the fairest rose in her wreath of youthful beauty.

A woman without poetry is like a landscape without sunshine. We see every object as distinctly as when the sunshine is upon it; but the beauty of the whole is wanting—the atmospheric tints, the harmony of earth and sky, we look for in vain; and we feel that though the actual substance of hill and dale, of wood and water, are the same, the spirituality of the scene is gone.

A woman without poetry! The idea is a paradox; for what single subject has ever been found so fraught with poetical associations as woman herself? "Woman, with her beauty, and grace, and gentleness, and fulness of feeling, and depth of affection, and her blushes of purity, and the tones and looks which only a mother's heart can inspire."

The little encouragement which poetry meets with in the present day, arises, I imagine, out of its supposed opposition to utility; and certainly, if to eat and to drink, to dress as well or better than our neighbors, and to amass a fortune in the shortest possible space of time, be the highest aim of our existence, then the less we have to do with poetry the better. But may we not be mistaken in the ideas we habitually attach to the word utility? There is a utility of material, and another of immaterial things. There is a utility in calculating our bodily wants, and our resources, and in regulating our personal efforts in proportion to both; but there is a higher utility in sometimes setting the mind free, like a bird that has been caged, to spread its wings, and soar into the ethereal world. There is a higher utility in sometimes pausing to feel the power which is in the immortal spirit to search out the principle of beauty, whether it bursts upon us with the dawn of rosy morning, or walks at gorgeous noon across the hills and valleys, or lies, at evening's dewy close, enshrined within a folded flower.

It is good, and therefore it must be useful, to see and to feel that the all-wise Creator has set the stamp of degradation only upon those *things which perish in the using*; but that all those which enlarge and elevate the soul, all which afford us the highest and purest enjoyment, from the loftiest range of sublimity, to the softest emotions of tenderness and love, are, and must be, immortal. Yes, the mountains may be overthrown, and the heavens themselves may melt away, but all the ideas with which they inspired us—their vastness and their grandeur, will remain. Every flower might fade from the garden of earth, but would beauty, as an essence, therefore cease to exist? Even love might fail us here. Alas! how often does it fail us at our utmost need! But the principle of love is the same; and there is no human heart so callous as not to respond to the language of the poet, when he says—

"They sin who tell us love can die

* * * * *

Its holy flame for ever burneth,
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth;
Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times oppress,
It here is tried and purified,
And bath in heaven its perfect rest;
It soweth here with toil and care,
But the harvest-time of love is there."

All these ideas are excited, and all these impressions are made upon the mind through the medium of poetry. By poetry, I do not mean that vain babbling in rhyme, which finds no echo, either in the understanding or the heart. By poetry, I mean that ethereal fire, which touched not the lips only, but the soul of Milton, when he sung of

"Man's first disobedience,"

and which has inspired all who ever walked the same enchanted ground, from the father of poetry himself, down to

"The simple bard, rough at the rustic plough."

Thousands have felt this principle of poetry within them, who yet have never learned to lip in numbers; and perhaps they are the wisest of their class, for they have thus the full enjoyment which poetic feeling affords,

without the disappointment which so frequently attends upon the efforts of those who venture to commit themselves in verse.

Men of business, whose hearts and minds are buried in their bales of goods, and who know no relaxation from the office or the counter, except what the daily newspaper affords, are apt to conclude that poetry does nothing for them; because it never keeps their accounts, prepares their dinner, nor takes charge of their domestic affairs. Now, though I should be the last person to recommend poetry as a substitute for household economy, or to put even the brightest emanations of genius in the place of domestic duty, I do not see why the two should not exist together; nor am I quite convinced that, although a vast proportion of mankind have lost their relish for poetry, it would not in reality be better for them to be convinced by their companions of the gentler sex, that poetry, so far from being incompatible with social or domestic comfort, is capable of being associated with every rational and lawful enjoyment.

Yes, it is better for every one to have their minds elevated, rather than degraded—raised up to a participation in thoughts and feelings in which angels might take a part, rather than chained down to the grovelling cares of mere corporeal existence; and never do we feel more happy than when, in the performance of any necessary avocation, we look beyond the gross material on which we are employed to those relations of thought and feeling, that connect the act of duty which occupies our hands with some being we love, that teach us to realize, while thus engaged, the smile of gratitude which is to constitute our reward, or the real benefit that act will be the means of conferring, even when no gratitude is there.

What man of cultivated mind, who has ever tried the experiment, would choose to live with a woman, whose whole soul was absorbed in the strife, the tumult, the perpetual discord which constant occupation in the midst of material things so inevitably produces; rather than with one whose attention, equally alive to practical duties, had a world

of deeper feeling in her "heart of hearts," with which no selfish, worldly, or vulgar thoughts could mingle?

It is not because we love poetry, that we must be always reading, quoting, or composing it. Far otherwise. For that bad taste, which would thus abuse and misapply so sacred a gift, is the very opposite of poetical. The love of poetry, or in other words, the experience of deep poetic feeling, is rather a principle, which, while it inspires the love of beauty in general, forgets not the beauty of fitness and order; and therefore can never sanction that which is grotesque or out of place. It teaches us, that nothing which offends the feelings of others can be estimable or praiseworthy in ourselves; for it is only in reference to her association with others, that woman can be in herself poetical. She may even fill a book with poetry, and not be poetical in her own character; because she may at the same time be selfish, vain, and worldly-minded.

To have the mind so imbued with poetic feeling that it shall operate as a charm upon herself and others, woman must be lifted out of self, she must see in every thing material a relation, an essence, and an end, beyond its practical utility. She must regard the little envyings, bickerings, and disputes about common things, only as weeds in the pleasant garden of life, bearing no comparison in importance with the loveliness of its flowers. She must forget even her own personal attractions, in her deep sense of the beauty of the whole created universe, and she must lose the very voice of flattery to herself, in her own intense admiration of what is excellent in others.

This it is to be poetical; and I ask again, whether it is not good, in these practical and busy times, that the Daughters of England should make a fresh effort to retain that high-toned spirituality of character, which has ever been the proudest distinction of their sex, in order that they may possess that influence over the minds of men, which the intellectual and the refined alone are capable of maintaining?

Let them look for a moment at the condition of woman wherever this high tone of character has been wanting, where she has been identified merely with material things, and, as a necessary consequence, regarded as a soulless and degraded being, essential to society only in her ministration to the general good of man. But we close the scene ere it is fully unfolded. The Daughters of England must feel within themselves that a higher and a nobler destiny is theirs.

CHAPTER V.

TASTE, TACT, AND OBSERVATION.

In the cursory survey we have now taken of what may properly be called the intellectual groundwork of the female character, our attention has been directed not only to those scholastic attainments which are generally comprehended in a good education, but to that general knowledge, which can only be acquired by after-study, by observation, by reading, and by association with good society.

All these, however, are but the materials of character, materials altogether useless, and sometimes worse than useless, without the operation of a master-power to select, improve, and turn them to the best account. With men, this power is most frequently self-interest—with women it is that bias of feeling towards what they are most inclined to love, which is generally recognised under the name of taste; and both these principles begin to exercise their influence long before the mind has attained any high degree of intellectual cultivation, and long before we are aware of our own motives. I have called this principle in woman, taste, because so far as it is biased by the affections, taste involves a moral; and it is a peculiar feature in the female character, that few things are esteemed which do not recommend themselves in some way or other to the affections.

Thus, women are often said to be deficient

in judgment, simply from this reason, that judgment is the faculty by which we are enabled to decide what is intrinsically best, while taste only influences us so far as to choose what is most agreeable to our own feelings.

It is no uncommon thing among young women, to hear them say, they like a thing they do not know why—nay, so warm are their expressions, one would be led to suppose their preference arose from absolute love, and yet,

“The reason why, they cannot tell.”

It is that habitual tendency of feeling or tone of mind, which I have called taste, that decides their choice; and it is thus that our moral worth or dignity depends upon the exercise of good taste, in the selection we make of the intellectual materials we work with in the formation of character, and the general arrangement of the whole, so as to render the trifling subservient to the more important, and each estimable according to the purpose for which it is used.

I am aware that religious principle is the only certain test by which character can be tried; but I am speaking of things as they are, not as they ought to be; and I wish to prove the great importance of taste, by showing that it is a principle busily at work in directing the decisions of the female mind on points supposed to be too trifling for the operation of religious feeling, and often before any definite idea of religion has been formed. It is strictly in subservience to religion, that I would speak of good taste as being of extreme importance to woman; because it serves her purpose in all those little variations of human life, which are too sudden in their occurrence, and too minute in themselves, for the operation of judgment; but which at the same time constitute so large a sum of woman's experience.

It may be said, that the rules of good taste are so arbitrary, that no one can fully understand them. I can only repeat, what I have said on this subject in “The Poetry of Life,” and I think the rule is sufficient for women

in general. It is, that the majority of opinion among those who are best able to judge, may safely be considered as most in accordance with good taste. Thus, when your taste has received from your parents a particular bias, which you are afterwards led to suspect is not a correct one, inquire with all respect, whether, on that particular subject, your parents are the persons best qualified to judge. Or when you find in society that any thing is universally approved or condemned, before accommodating your own taste to this exhibition of popular feeling, ask whether the judges who pronounce such sentence are competent ones, and if there be a higher tribunal at which the question can be tried—or in other words, judges who understand the subject better, let it be referred to them, before you finally make up your mind.

Perhaps it may be objected that this is a tedious process, and that taste is a thing of sudden conclusion. But let it be remembered, I am now speaking of the formation of a good taste, as a part of the character; not of the operation of taste where it has been formed. Nor, indeed, is the suddenness with which some young persons decide in matters of taste, any proof of their good sense. So far from this, we often find them, under the influence of better judges, reduced to the mortifying necessity of changing their opinions to the direct opposite of what they have too hastily expressed.

Still, though the process of forming the taste upon right principles, may at first be slow; and though it may sometimes appear too tedious for juvenile impetuosity, the exercise of good taste will in time become so easy, and habitual, as to operate almost like an instinct; and, until it is so, the process I have recommended, will have the great advantage of preventing young ladies from being too forward in expressing their sentiments; and what is of far greater importance, they will be cautious in making their selection of what they admire, and what they condemn.

Have we not all seen in society the ridiculous spectacle of a young and forward girl

exhibiting all the extravagance of juvenile importance in her condemnation of a book, which has not happened to please her fancy; when, had she waited a few minutes longer, the conversation would have taken such a turn, as would have convinced her that among wise men, and enlightened women, the work was considered justly worthy of high commendation? With what grace could she, then, after having thus committed herself, either defend, or withdraw her own opinions? or with what complacency could she reflect upon the exposure she had made of her bad taste, before persons qualified to judge? Far wiser is the part, perhaps, of her more diffident companion, who having equally failed in discovering the merits of the work in question, goes home and reads it again, with her attention more directed to its beauties; and who, even if she fails at last in deriving that pleasure from the book which she had hoped, has the humility to conclude that the fault is in her own taste, which she then begins to regulate upon a new principle, and with a determination to endeavor to admire what the best judges pronounce to be really excellent.

We must not, however, attach too much importance to good taste, nor require it to operate beyond its legitimate sphere. Taste, unquestionably, gives a bias to the character, in its tendency to what is elevated or low, refined or vulgar; but after all, the part of taste is only that of a witness called into a court of justice, to test the value of an article, which has some relation to the great and momentous decision in which the judge, the jury, and the court, are so deeply interested. As taste is that witness, religion is that judge; and it is only as the one is kept subservient to the other, that it can be rendered conducive to our happiness or our good.

The province of taste, then, includes all the minute affairs of woman's life—which belongs to all pleasurable feeling, held in subordination to religious principle—all which belongs to dress, manners, and social habits, so far as they may be said to be ladylike, or otherwise. Should any consideration, rela-

ting to one or all of these points, be allowed to interfere in the remotest degree with the requirements of religion, it is a proof, whenever they do so, that the standard of excellence is a wrong one; and the individual who commits so fatal an error, would do well to look to the consequences, and remedy the evil before it shall be too late. Religion never yet was injured by permitting good taste to follow in her train; but that lovely handmaid can deserve the name of taste no longer, if she attempts to step before religion, or in any respect to assume her place.

Above every other feature which adorns the female character, delicacy stands foremost within the province of good taste. Not that delicacy which is perpetually in quest of something to be ashamed of, which makes a merit of a blush, and simpers at the false construction its own ingenuity has put upon an innocent remark; this spurious kind of delicacy is as far removed from good taste, as from good feeling, and good sense; but that high-minded delicacy which maintains its pure and undeviating walk alike among women, as in the society of men; which shrinks from no necessary duty, and can speak, when required, with seriousness and kindness of things at which it would be ashamed indeed to smile or to blush—that delicacy which knows how to confer a benefit without wounding the feelings of another, and which understands also how and when to receive one—that delicacy which can give alms without display, and advice without assumption; and which pains not the most humble or susceptible being in creation. This is the delicacy which forms so important a part of good taste, that where it does not exist as a natural instinct, it is taught as the first principle of good manners, and considered as the universal passport to good society.

Nor can this, the greatest charm of female character, if totally neglected in youth, ever be acquired in after life. When the mind has been accustomed to what is vulgar, or gross, the fine edge of feeling is gone, and nothing can restore it. It is comparatively

easy, on first entering upon life, to maintain the page of thought unsullied, by closing it against every improper image; but when once such images are allowed to mingle with the imagination, so as to be constantly revived by memory, and thus to give their tone to the habitual mode of thinking and conversing, the beauty of the female character may indeed be said to be gone, and its glory departed.

But we will no longer contemplate so unlovely—so unnatural a picture. Woman, happily for her, is gifted by nature with a quickness of perception, by which she is able to detect the earliest approach of any thing which might tend to destroy that high-toned purity of character, for which, even in the days of chivalry, she was more revered and adored, than for her beauty itself. This quickness of perception in minute and delicate points, with the power which woman also possesses of acting upon it instantaneously, has, in familiar phraseology, obtained the name of tact; and when this natural gift is added to good taste, the two combined are of more value to a woman in the social and domestic affairs of every-day life, than the most brilliant intellectual endowments could be without them.

When a woman is possessed of a high degree of tact, she sees, as if by a kind of second-sight, when any little emergency is likely to occur; or when, to use a more familiar expression, things do not seem likely to go right. She is thus aware of any sudden turn in conversation, and prepared for what it may lead to; but, above all, she can penetrate into the state of mind of those with whom she is placed in contact, so as to detect the gathering gloom upon another's brow, before the mental storm shall have reached any formidable height; to know when the tone of voice has altered, when an unwelcome thought has presented itself, and when the pulse of feeling is beating higher or lower in consequence of some apparently trifling circumstance which has just transpired.

In these and innumerable instances of a similar nature, the woman of tact not only

perceives the variations which are constantly taking place in the atmosphere of social life, but she adapts herself to them with a facility which the law of love enables her to carry out, so as to spare her friends the pain and annoyance which so frequently arise out of the mere mismanagement of familiar and apparently unimportant affairs. And how often do these seeming trifles—

“The lightly uttered, careless word”—

the wrong construction put upon a right meaning—the accidental betrayal of what there would have been no duplicity in concealing—how often do these wound us more than direct unkindness! Even the young feel this sometimes too sensitively for their own peace. But while the tears they weep in private attest the severity of their sorrow, let them not, like the misanthrope, turn back with hatred or contempt upon the world which they suppose to have injured them; but let them rather learn this wholesome lesson, by their own experience, so to meet the peculiarities of those with whom they associate, as to soften down the asperities of temper, to heal the wounds of morbid feeling, and to make the current of life run smoothly, so far as they have power to cast the oil of peace upon its waters.

Such then is the general use of tact. Particular instances of its operation would be too minute, and too familiar, to occupy, with propriety, the pages of a book; for, like many other female excellences, it is more valued, and better understood, by the loss a character sustains without it, than by any definite form it assumes, even when most influential upon the conversation and conduct. This valuable acquirement, however, can never be attained without the cultivation in early life of habits of close observation. It is not upon the notes of a piece of music only, not upon a pattern of fancy-work, nor even upon the pages of an interesting book, that the attention must alone be brought to bear; but upon things in general, so that the faculty of observation shall become so sharpened by constant use, that nothing can escape it.

Far be it from me to recommend that idle and vulgar curiosity, which peeps about without a motive, or, worse than that, with a view to collect materials for scandal. Observation is a faculty which may be kept perpetually at work, without intrusion or offence to others; and at the same time, with infinite benefit to ourselves. Every object in creation, every sound, every sensation, every production either of nature or of art, supplies food for observation, while observation in its turn supplies food for thought. I have been astonished in my association with young ladies, at the very few things they appear to have to think about. Generally speaking, they might be all talked up in the course of a week. And what is the consequence? It is far beyond a jest, for the consequence too frequently is, that they grow weary of themselves, then weary of others, and lastly weary of life—of life, that precious and immortal gift, which they share with angels, and which to them, as to the angelic host, has been bestowed in order that therewith they may glorify the gracious Giver.

Now, this very weariness, which at the same time is the most prevalent disease, and the direst calamity, we find among young women; since it not only makes them useless and miserable, but drives them perpetually into excitement as a momentary relief—this weariness arises out of various causes with which young people are not sufficiently made acquainted, and one of the most powerful of which is, a neglect of the habit of observation.

“I have seen nobody, and heard nothing to-day,” is the vapid remark of one to whom the glorious heavens, and the fruitful earth, might as well be so much paint and patchwork. “What an uninteresting person!” exclaims another, who has never looked a second time at some fine expressive countenance, where deep feeling tells its own impassioned story. “I wish some one would come and invite us out to tea,” says a third, whose household library is stored with books, and whose parents have within themselves a fund of intelligence, which they would be

but too happy to communicate, could they find an attentive listener in their child. "But my life is so monotonous," pleads a fourth, "and my range of vision so limited, that I have nothing to observe." With those who live exclusively in towns, I confess this argument might have some weight; and for this reason, I suppose it is, that town-bred young women are often more ignorant than those who spend a portion of their early life in the country—not certainly because there is really less to be observed in towns, but because the mind, in the midst of a multitude of moving images, is comparatively unimpressed by any. I confess, too, there is something in the noise and tumult of a crowded city, which stupifies the mind, and blunts its perception of individual things, until the whole shifting pageant assumes the character of some vast panorama, upon which we look, only with regard to the whole, and forgetful of each individual part.

"It is true, I have taken my accustomed walk in the city," observes a fifth young woman, "but I have found nothing to think about." What! was there nothing to think about in the squalid forms of want and misery which met you at every turn?—nothing in the disappointed look of the patient mendicant as you passed him by?—nothing in the pale and half-clad mother, seated on the step at the rich man's door, folding her infant to her bosom, and shrouding it with the "wings of care?"—was there nothing in all that was doing among those busy thousands, for supplying the common wants of man; the droves of weary animals goaded, stupified, or maddened, none of which would ever tread again the greensward on the mountain's side, or slake its thirst beside the woodland brook?—was there nothing in the bold and beautiful charger, the bounding steed, or the sleek and well-fed carriage-horse, contrasted with the galled and lacerated victims of oppression, waiting for their round of agony to come again?—was there nothing in the vastness of man's resources, the variety of his inventions, the power of combined effort, as displayed in that perpetual succession of lux-

uries both for the body and the mind?—was there nothing in that aspect of order and industry, so important to individual, as well as national prosperity?—was there nothing, in short, in that mighty mass of humanity, or in the millions of pulses beating there, with health or sickness, weal or woe?—was there nothing in all this to think about? Why, one of our late poets was wont to weep as he walked along Fleet-street and the Strand; so intense were his sympathies with that moving host of fellow-beings. And can young and sensitive women be found to pass over the same ground, and say they find nothing to think about? Still less could we expect to meet with a being thus impervious in the country; for there, if human nature pleases not, she may find

"———books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

Whether it arises from an intellectual, or a moral defect, that this happy experience is so seldom realized, is a question of some importance in the formation of character. If young ladies really do not wish to be close observers, the evil is a moral one, and I cannot but suspect that much truth lies here. They wish, undoubtedly, to enjoy every amusement which can be derived from observation, but they do not wish to observe; because they either have some little pet sorrow which they prefer brooding over to themselves, or some favorite subject of gossip, which they prefer talking over with their friends, or they think it more ladylike not to notice common things, or more interesting to be absorbed, to start when spoken to, and to spend the greatest portion of their time in a state of revery.

If such be the choice of any fair reader of these pages, I can only warn her that the punishment of her error will eventually come upon her, and that as surely as she neglects in youth to cultivate the expansive and pleasure-giving faculty of observation, so surely will life become wearisome to her in old age, if not before. There are, however, many whose error on this point arises solely out of

their ignorance of the innumerable advantages to be derived from a close observation of things in general. Their lives are void of interest, their minds run to waste, they are constantly pining for excitement, without being conscious of any definite cause for what they suffer. They see their more energetic and intelligent companions animated, interested, and amused, with something which they are consequently most anxious to be made acquainted with, supposing it will afford the same pleasure to them; when, to their astonishment, they find it only some object which has for a long time met their daily gaze, without ever having made an impression upon their own minds, or excited a single idea in connection with it. To such individuals it becomes a duty to point out, as far as we are able, the obstacles which stand in the way of their deriving that instruction and amusement from general and individual observation, which would fill up the void of their existence, and render them at the same time more companionable and more happy.

There is a word in our language of most inexplicable meaning, which by universal consent has become a sort of test-word among young ladies, and by which they try the worth of every thing, as regards its claim upon their attention. I mean the word *interesting*. In vain have I endeavored to attach any definite sense to this expression, as generally used by the class of persons addressed in this work. I can only conjecture that its signification is synonymous with *exciting*, and that it is applicable to all which awakens sentiment, or produces emotion. However this may be, the fact that a person or thing is considered among young ladies as uninteresting, stamps it with irremediable obloquy, so that it is never more to be spoken, or even thought of; while, on the other hand, whatever is pronounced to be interesting, is considered worthy of their utmost attention, even though it should possess no other recommendation; and thus not only heroes and heroines, but books, letters, conversation, speeches, meetings public and private, friends, and even lovers, are tried by

this universal test, and if they fail here, woe betide the luckless candidate for female favor!

Of those who have hitherto been slaves to this all-potent word, I would now ask one simple question—Is it not possible to create their own world of interest out of the materials which Providence has placed before them? or must they by necessity follow in the train of those who languish after the excitement of fictitious sorrow, or who luxuriate in the false sentiment of immoral books, and the flattery of unprincipled men, simply because they find them interesting?

Never has there been a delusion more insidious, or more widely spread, than that which arises out of the arbitrary use of this dangerous and deceitful word, as it obtains among young women. Ask one of them why she cannot read a serious book; she answers, "the style is so uninteresting." Ask another why she does not attend a public meeting for the benefit of her fellow-creatures; she answers that "such meetings have lost their interest." Ask a third why she does not make a friend of her sister; she tells you that her sister "does not interest" her. And so on, through the whole range of public and private duty, for there is no call so imperative, and no claim so sacred, as to escape being submitted to this test: and on the other hand, no sentiment that cannot be reconciled, no task that cannot be undertaken, and no companionship that cannot be borne with, under the recommendation of having been introduced in an interesting manner.

Of all the obstacles which stand in the way of that exercise of the faculty of observation, which I would so earnestly recommend, I believe there is none so great as the importance which is attached to the word "interesting," among young women. Upon whatever interests them, they are sufficiently ready to employ their powers of observation; but with regard to what does not, they pass through the pleasant walks of daily life, as if surrounded by the dreary wastes of a desert. Of want of memory, too, they are apt to complain, and from the frequency with which

this grievance is spoken of, and the little effort that is made against it, one would rather suppose it an embellishment to the character than otherwise, to be deficient in the power of recollecting. It is a fact, however, which personal experience has not been able to controvert, that whatever we really observe, we are able to remember. Ask one of these fair complainers, for instance, who laments her inability to remember, what colored dress was worn by some distinguished belle, for what piece of music she herself obtained the most applause, or what subject was chosen by some beau-ideal of a speaker, and it is more than probable her memory will not be found at fault, because these are the things upon which she has employed her observation; and, had the subjects themselves been of a higher order, an equal effort of the same useful faculty, would have impressed them in the same imperishable characters upon her memory.

After considering the subject in this point of view, how important does it appear that we should turn our attention to the power which exists in every human being, and especially during the season of youth, of creating a world of interest for themselves, of deviating so far from the tendency of popular taste, as sometimes to leave the Corsairs of Byron to the isles of Greece, and the Gypsies of Scott to the mountains of his native land; and while they look into the page of actual life, they will find that around them, in their daily walks, beneath the parental roof, or mixing with the fireside circle by the homely hearth, there are often feelings as deep, and hearts as warm, and experience as richly fraught with interest, as ever glowed in verse, or lived in story. There is not, there cannot be any want of interest in the exercise of the sympathies of our nature upon common things, when no novel has ever exhibited scenes of deeper emotion, than observation has revealed to every human being, whose perceptions have been habitually alive to the claims of weak and suffering humanity; nor has fiction ever portrayed such profound wretchedness as we

may daily find among the poor and the depraved; and not wretchedness alone, for what language of mimic feeling has ever been found to equal the touching pathos of the poor and simple-hearted? Nay, so far does imagination fall short of reality, that the highest encomium we can pass upon a writer of fiction, is, that his expressions are "true to nature."

This is what we may find every day in actual life, if we will but look for it—intensity of feeling under all its different forms; the mother's tender love; the father's high ambition; hope in its early bud, its first blight, and its final extinction; the joy of youth; the helplessness of old age; patience under suffering; disinterested zeal; strong faith, and calm resignation. And shall we say that we feel no interest in realities of which the novel and the drama are but feeble imitations? It is true that heroes and heroines do not strike upon their hearts, or fall prostrate, or tear their hair before us, every day; but I repeat again, that the touching pathos of true feeling, which all may become acquainted with, if they will employ their powers of observation upon human life as it exists around us, has nothing to equal it in poetry or fiction. If, then, we would turn our attention to human life as it is, and employ our powers of observation upon common things, we should find a never-failing source of interest, not only in the sympathies of our common nature, but in all which displays the wisdom and goodness of the Creator; for this ought ever to be our highest and ultimate aim in the exercise of every faculty we possess, to perceive the impress of the finger of God upon all which his will has designed, or his hand has created.

All I have yet said on this subject, however, has reference only to the benefit, or the enjoyment, of the individual who employs the faculty of observation. The law of love directs us to a happier and holier exercise of this faculty. No one can be truly kind, without having accustomed themselves in early life to habits of close observation. They may be kind in feeling, but never in effect;

for kindness is always estimated, not by the good it desires, but by that which it actually produces. A woman who is a close observer, under the influence of the law of love, knows so well what belongs to social and domestic comfort, that she never enters a room occupied by a family whose happiness she has at heart, without seeing in an instant every trifle upon which that comfort depends. If the sun is excluded when it would be more cheerful to let it shine in—if the cloth is not spread at the right time for the accustomed meal—if the fire is low, or the hearth unswept—if the chairs are not standing in the most inviting places, her quick eye detects in an instant what is wanting to complete the general air of comfort and order which it is woman's business to diffuse over her whole household ; while, on the other hand, if her attention has never been directed to any of these things, she enters the room without looking around her, and sits down to her own occupations without once perceiving that the servants are behindhand with the breakfast, that the blinds are still down on a dark winter's morning, that a window is still open, that a chair is standing with its back to the fender, that the fire is smoking for want of better arrangement, or that a corner of the hearth-rug is turned up.

Now, provided all other things are equal, which of these two women would be the most agreeable to sit down with ? The answer is clear ; yet, nothing need be wanting in the last, but the habit of observation, to render her a more inviting companion. It may perhaps be surmised, if not actually said, of the other, that her mind must be filled with trifles, to enable her habitually to see such as are here specified ; but it is a fact confirmed by experience, and knowledge of the world, that a quick and close observation of little things, by no means precludes observation of greater ; and that the woman who cannot comfortably sit down until all these trifling matters are adjusted, will be more likely than another, whose faculties have not been thus exercised, to perceive, by an instantaneous glance of the eye, the

peculiar temper of her husband's mind, as well as to discover the characteristic peculiarities of some interesting guest ; while, on the other hand, the woman who never notices these things, will be more likely to lose the point of a clever remark, and to fail to perceive the most interesting features in the society with which she associates. The faculty of observation is the same, whatever object it may be engaged upon ; and that which is minute, may sharpen its powers, and stimulate its exercise, as well as that which is more important.

With regard to kindness, it is impossible so to adapt our expressions of good-will, as to render them acceptable, unless we minutely observe the characters, feelings, and situation of those around us. Inappropriate kindness is not only a waste of good things, it is sometimes an annoyance—nay, even an offence to the sensitive and fastidious, because it proves that the giver of the present, or the actor in the intended benefit has been more solicitous to display his own generosity, than to promote their real good ; or he might have seen, that, with their habits, tastes, and peculiarities, such an act must be altogether useless.

A woman wanting the habit of observation, though influenced by the kindest feelings, will be guilty of a vast amount of inconsistencies, which, summed up together by those whom they have offended, will, in time, obtain for her the reputation of being any thing but kind in her treatment of others. Such, for instance, as walking away at a brisk pace, intent upon her own business, and leaving behind some delicate and nervous invalid to endure all the mortification of neglect. When told of her omission, she may hasten back, make a thousand apologies, and feel really grieved at her own conduct ; but she will not easily convince the invalid that it would not have shown more real kindness to have observed from the first that she was left behind. No ; there is no way of being truly kind, without cultivating habits of observation. Nor will such habits come to our aid in after life, if they have been neglected in youth. Willingness to oblige, is

not all that is wanted, or this might supply the defect. Where this willingness exists without observation, how often will a well-meaning person start up with a vague consciousness of some omission, look about with awkward curiosity to see what is wanted, blunder upon the right thing at the wrong time, and then sit down again, after having made every one else uncomfortable, and himself ridiculous !

In connection with the habit of observation, how much real kindness may be practised, even by the most insignificant member of a family ! I have seen a little child, far too diffident to speak to the stranger-guest, still watch his plate at table with such assiduity, that no wish remained ungratified, simply from having just what the child perceived he most wanted, placed silently beside him.

From this humble sphere of minute observation, men are generally and very properly considered as excluded. But to women they look, and shall they look in vain, for the filling up of this important page of human experience ? Each particular item of the account may be regarded as beneath their notice ; but well do they know, and deeply do they regret, if the page is left blank, or if the sum-total is not greatly to their advantage.

Observation and attention are so much the same in their results, that I shall not consider them separately, but only add a few remarks on the subject of attention as it applies to reading.

There is no social pleasure, among those it has been my lot to experience, which I esteem more highly than that of listening to an interesting book well read ; when a fireside circle, chiefly composed of agreeable and intelligent women, are seated at their work. In the same way as the lonely traveller, after gaining some lofty eminence, on the opening of some lovely valley, or the closing of some sunset scene, longs to see the joy he is then feeling reflected in the face of the being he loves best on earth ; so, a great portion of the enjoyment of reading, as experienced by

a social disposition, depends upon the same impressions being made upon congenial minds at the same time. I have spoken of an interesting book, *well* read, because I think the art of reading aloud is far too rarely cultivated ; and I have often been astonished at the deficiency which exists on this point, after what is called a finished education.

To my own feelings, the easy and judicious reading of a well-written book, on a favorite subject, is even more delightful than music ; because it supplies the mind with ideas, at the same time that it gratifies the ear and the taste. Little do they know of this pleasure, who pass in and out of a room unnecessarily, or who whisper about their thimble or their thread, while this music of the mind is thrilling the souls of those who understand it ; and little do they know of social enjoyment, who prefer poring over the pages of a book alone, rather than allowing others to share their pleasure at the same time. I am aware that many books may be well worth reading alone, which are not calculated for general reading ; and I am aware also, that every fireside circle is not capable of appreciating this gratification : but I speak of those which are ; and I think that woman, as a peculiarly social being, should be careful to arrange and adjust such affairs, as to create the greatest amount of social pleasure. Of this, however, hereafter.

It is more to my present purpose, to speak of those habits of inattention to which many young persons unscrupulously yield, whenever a book is read aloud. It may be remarked, as a certain proof of their want of interest, when they rise to leave the room, and request the reader *not* to wait for them ; for though politeness may require some concession on their part, it is a far higher compliment to the reader, and indeed to the company in general, to evince an interest so great, than rather than lose any part of the book, they will ask, as a personal favor, that the reading of it may be suspended until their return, provided only their absence is brief. I have often felt with sympathy for the reader on these occasions, the disap-

pointment he must experience when assured by one of his audience, that to her at least his efforts to give pleasure, and excite interest, have been in vain.

Beyond this there is a habit of secret inattention, of musing upon other things whenever a book is read aloud, which grows upon the young, until they lose the power to command their attention, even when they would. This, however, I imagine to arise in great measure out of the want of cultivating the art of reading; for the monotonous tone we so frequently hear, the misplaced emphasis, and, worse than all, the affectation of reading well, when the reader and not the book is too evidently intended to be noticed, are of themselves sufficient to repel attention, and to excite a desire to do any thing rather than listen.

Truly has it been said, that "the sport of musing is the waste of life," for though occasional seasons of mental retirement are profitable to all, the habit of endless and aimless revery, which some young persons indulge in, is as destructive to mental energy, as to practical usefulness! Hour after hour glides on with them unmarked, while thought is just kept alive by a current of undefined images flowing through the mind.—And what remains? "A weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" existence; as burdensome to themselves, as unproductive of good to others.

As a defence against the encroachments of this insidious enemy, it is good to be in earnest about every thing we do—earnest in our studies—earnest in our familiar occupations—earnest in our attachments—but above all, earnest in our duties. There is a listless, dreamy, halfish way of acting, which evades the stigma of direct indolence, but which never really accomplishes one laudable purpose. Enthusiasm is the direct opposite of this; but in the safe medium between this extreme and enthusiasm, is that earnestness which I would recommend to all young persons as a habit. Enthusiasm, to the mind of youth, is vastly more taking than sober earnestness; yet, when we look to the end, how

often do we find that the one is discouraged by difficulties, and finally diverted from its object, where the other perseveres, and ultimately succeeds!

Habitual earnestness is directly opposed to habitual trifling; and this latter may truly be said to be the bane of woman's life. To be in earnest is to go steadily to work with whatever we undertake; counting the cost, and weighing the difficulty, and still engaging in the task, assured that the end to be attained will repay us for every effort we make. To do one thing and think about another, to begin and not go on, to change our plan so often as to defeat our purpose, or to act without having formed a plan at all, this it is to trifle, and consequently to waste both time and effort.

By cultivating habitual earnestness in youth, we acquire the power of bringing all the faculties of the mind to bear upon any given point, whenever we have a purpose to accomplish. We do not then find, at the time we want to act, that attention has gone astray, that resolution cannot be fixed, that fancy has scattered the materials with which we were to work, that taste refuses her sanction, that inclination rebels, or that industry chooses to be otherwise engaged. No; such is the power of habit, that, when accustomed from early youth to be in earnest in whatever we do, no sooner does an opportunity for making any laudable effort occur, than all these faculties and powers are ready at our call; and with their combined and willing aid, how much may be attained either for ourselves or others!

The great enemy we have to encounter, both in the use of the faculty of observation, and in the cultivation of habits of earnestness, is indolence; an enemy which besets our path from infancy to age, which stands in the way of all our best endeavors, and even when a good resolution has been formed, persuades us to delay the execution of it. Could we prevail upon the young to regard this enemy as it really is—a greedy monster, following upon their steps, and ever grasping out of their possession, their time,

their talents, and their strength,—instead of a pleasant fireside companion, to be dallied with in their leisure hours—what a service would be done to the whole human race ! for, to those who have been the willing slaves of indolence in youth, it will most assuredly become the tyrant of old age.

The season of youth, then, is the time to oppose this enemy with success ; and those who have quickened their powers of observation by constant exercise, and applied themselves with habitual earnestness to unremitting efforts of attention and industry, will be in no danger of finding life, as it advances, either uninteresting or wearisome ; or their own portion of experience destitute of utility and enjoyment.

CHAPTER IV.

BEAUTY, HEALTH, AND TEMPER.

THESE are personal qualifications universally considered to be of great importance to the female sex ; yet is there something sad in the contemplation of the first of these, so great is the disproportion between the estimation in which it is regarded by young people in general, and its real value in the aggregate of human happiness. Indeed, when we think of its frailty, its superficial character, and the certainty of its final and utter extinction—and connect these considerations with the incalculable amount of ambition, envy, and false applause, which beauty has excited—we should rather be inclined to consider it a bane than a blessing to the human race.

Female beauty has ever been the theme of inspiration with poets, and with heroes, since the world began ; and for all the sins and the follies, and they are many, for which beauty has formed the excuse, has not man been the abettor, if not the cause ? Of his habitual and systematic treachery to his weak sister on this one point, what page, what book shall contain the record ? Would that some

pen more potent than ever yet was wielded by a human hand, would transcribe the dark history, and present it to his view ; for happy, thrice happy will be that era, if it shall ever come, in the existence of woman, when man shall be true to her real interests, and when he shall esteem it his highest privilege to protect her—not from enchanted castles, from jealous rivals, or from personal foes, but from the more insidious and fatal enemies which lurk within her own heart—from vanity, from envy, and from love of admiration.

To prove that I lay no unfounded charge at the door of man in this respect, let us look into society as it is. The beautiful woman ! What court is paid to her ! What extravagances are uttered and committed by those who compose her circle of admirers ! She opens her lips : men of high intellectual pretensions are proud to listen. Some trifling or vapid remark is all she utters. They applaud, if she attempts to be judicious ; they laugh, if she aims at being gay ; or they evince the most profound reverence for her sentiments, if the tone of her expression is grave. Listen to the flattery they offer at the shrine of this idol of an hour. No ! it is too gross, too absurd for repetition. One thing, however, makes it serious. Such flattery is frequently at the expense of rivals, and even of friends ; so that, while these admirers foster vanity, they are not satisfied without awaking the demon of envy in a soul, an immortal soul, which it ought to have been their generous and noble aim to shield from every taint of evil, and especially from so foul a taint as that of envy.

But let us turn to another scene in the drama of society. The very same men are disclaiming their unsuccessful efforts to obtain the favor of this beauty, and ridiculing the emptiness and the folly of the remarks they so lately applauded. Time passes on. The beauty so worshipped begins to wane. Other stars shine forth in the hemisphere, and younger *belles* assert superior claims to admiration. Who, then, remains of all that prostrate circle ? Not one ! They are all

gone over to the junior claimant, and are laughing with her at the disappointment of the faded beauty.

This is a dark and melancholy picture, but for its truth I appeal to any who have mixed much in general society, who have either been beautiful themselves, or the confidants of beauty, or who have been accustomed to hear the remarks of men on these subjects, when no beauty was present. I might appeal also to the fact, that personal beauty among women alone, receives no exaggerated or undue homage. Were there no men in the world, female beauty would be valued as a charm, but by no means as one of the highest order; and happily for women, an idea prevails among them, that those who want this charm, have the deficiency made up to them in talent, or in some other way.

Still, there is so natural and irresistible a delight in gazing upon beauty, that I never could understand the philosophy of those moralists who would endeavor to keep from a lovely girl, the knowledge that she was so. Her mirror is more faithful, and unless that be destroyed, the danger is, that she will suspect such moral managers of some sinister design in endeavoring to deceive her on this point, and that, in consequence, she will be put upon thinking still more of the value of a gift, with the possession of which she is not to be trusted. Far wiser is the part of that counsellor of youth, who, convinced that much of the danger attendant upon beauty, as a personal recommendation, arises out of low and ignorant views of the value of beauty itself, thus endeavors to show the folly of attaching importance to that which the touch of disease may at any hour destroy, and which time must inevitably efface.

The more the mind is expanded and enlightened, the more it is filled with a sense of what is admirable in the creation at large; and the more it is impressed with the true image of moral beauty, the less it will be occupied with the consideration of any personal claim to flattery or applause. There will always be a circle of humble candidates for favor surrounding the unguarded steps of youth,

whose influence will be excited on the side of personal beauty, perhaps more than in any other way. Without disrespect to the valuable class of servants, to which I allude, for I am convinced they *know not what they do*, I must express my fears, that they are often busily at work upon the young mind, long before the age of womanhood, instilling into it their own low views of beauty as a personal distinction; and it is against this influence, more especially as it begins the earliest, that I would call up all the power of moral and intellectual expansion, in order to fill the mind as early as possible with elevated thoughts of the creation in general, and of admiration for that part of it which is separate from self.

A being thus enlightened, will perceive that admiration is one of the higher faculties of our nature unknown to the brute creation, and one, the lawful exercise of which, affords us perhaps more enjoyment than any other. Upon the right employment of this faculty depends much of the moral tendency of human character. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we should learn in early life to admire only what is truly excellent; and as there is an excellence of beauty, which it is consonant with the higher attributes of our nature that we should admire, it necessarily follows, that to search for beauty as an essence pervading the universe, is an employment not unworthy of an intelligent and immortal being.

Let us then examine, so far as we are able to do so, "the treasures of earth, ocean, and air;" and we shall see that it has pleased the all-wise Creator, to diffuse the principle of beauty over every region of the world. The deep sea, into whose mysterious caves no human eye can penetrate, is full of it. The blue ether, and the sailing clouds, sun, moon, and stars, are they not beautiful? and the fruitful garden of the earth, wherever nature smiles?

"How beautiful is all this visible world!"

Not beautiful in its brightness and sublimity alone, but beautiful wherever the steps of

Deity have trod—wherever the hand of the divine artificer has been employed, from the golden glory of a sunset cloud, to the gossamer thread on which are strung the pearls of morning dew.

Now, let me ask whether a mind, habitually engaged in the contemplation of subjects such as these, would be likely to be diverted from its noble but natural exercise, by vulgar calculations upon the comparative beauty of a face? No. It would be perfectly aware, where such beauty did exist; but it would also be impressed with the important fact, that in relation to the wondrous and magnificent whole, its own share of beauty constituted so small a part, as scarcely to be worthy of a passing thought.

Those who are accustomed to enlightened views on this subject, will know also that there are different kinds of personal beauty, among which, that of form and coloring holds a very inferior rank. There is a beauty of expression, for instance, of sweetness, of nobility, of intellectual refinement, of feeling, of animation, of meekness, of resignation, and many other kinds of beauty, which may all be allied to the plainest features, and yet may remain, to give pleasure long after the blooming cheek has faded, and silver gray has mingled with the hair. And how far more powerful in their influence upon others, are some of these kinds of beauty! for, after all, beauty depends more upon the movements of the face, than upon the form of the features, when at rest; and thus, a countenance habitually under the influence of amiable feelings acquires a beauty of the highest order, from the frequency with which such feelings are the originating cause of the movements or expressions which stamp their character upon it.

Who has not waited for the first opening of the lips of a celebrated belle, to see whether her claims would be supported by

"The mind, the music breathing from her face;"

and who has not occasionally turned away repelled by the utter blank, or worse than blank, which the simple movement of the

mouth, in speaking, or smiling, has revealed?

The language of poetry describes the loud laugh as indicative of the vulgar mind; and certainly there are expressions, conveyed even through the medium of a smile, which need not Lavater to inform us that refinement of feeling, or elevation of soul, have little to do with the fair countenance on which they are impressed. On the other hand, there are plain women sometimes met with in society, every movement of whose features is instinct with intelligence; who, from the genuine heart-warm smiles which play about the mouth, the sweetly modulated voice, and the lighting up of an eye that looks as if it could "comprehend the universe," become perfectly beautiful to those who understand them, and still more so to those who live with them, and love them. Before such pretensions to beauty as these, how soon do the pink and white of a merely pretty face vanish into nothing!

Yet, if the beauty of expression should be less popular among women, from the circumstance of its being less admired by men than that of mere form and complexion, they do well in this, as in every other disputed question of ultimate good, to look to the end. Men have been found whose admiration of beauty was so great, that they have actually married for that alone, content, for its sake, to dispense with the presence of mind. And what has been the end to them, or rather to the luckless beings whose misfortune it was to be the objects of their choice?—A neglected and degraded lot, embittered by the fretfulness of disappointment on the part of their husbands; while, on the other hand, women, whose attractions have been of a more intellectual nature, have maintained their hold upon the affections of their companions, through life, even to the unlovely season of old age.

But, in addition to the insufficiency of mere beauty, there is another cause why men are so frequently disappointed in selecting merely pretty wives. They have a habit of supposing that if a woman is pretty, and not very clever, she must be amiable.

often do we find that the most temper, the most capricious will, and all calculation the most provokings, are connected with a weak and enfeebled mind. And added to all this, the false position the young beauty in society, the flattery to which she is exposed, the dominion she has permitted to assert, the triumph she has accustomed to feel over others, the her inclinations from constant inattention have attained—all these have to be added with, in addition to the incapacity of a feeble and undisciplined mind; and to this catalogue of evils, any one is sufficient to counterbalance the effects of mere personal beauty in a woman for life—a companion who is to show her husband the rough road of life, and whose influence upon his character and feelings will not end on this grave.

But, however, not think hardly of the intended beauty, simply as such. She is to be blamed for the natural imbecility of her mental powers, as to be commended for her personal charms. Both are the appointments of a wise Providence, but as both combined are means of exposing her to evils for which she is really unprotected, so she ought to be kindly warned of the dangers to which she is exposed since she possesses not in her deficient perception to know, that in reliance of her beauty she is made to occupy a false position in society, from which she assuredly has to descend, it becomes the duty of all who have her happy heart, to warn her, that in her intercourse with the world, she must not look for a kind and disinterested friend in man.

Far from asserting that there are not a few of noble and generous-hearted men who know how to be the friend of women, and the protector of her true interests; but the general tone of social intercourse is such that these instances are lamentably rare. The most objectionable part, however, of

what I would call the minor morals of social life, as regards the subject of female beauty, has not yet been alluded to. Man is sincere in one sense, in his admiration of real beauty while it lasts; and if when the ruling star begins to wane, he turns himself in the rays of another luminary, he is still faithful to beauty as the object of his worship, though the supposed divinity may be invested in a different shrine. If, then, his professions of admiration were offered only to the really beautiful, scarcely one woman in a hundred would be injured by the personal flattery of man. But, unfortunately, that large proportion of the female sex, who are not exactly pretty, nor altogether plain, are exposed to the same system of flattery, for charms which they really do not possess. I have often wondered whether there ever was a woman so destitute of personal attractions, that no man, at some time or other of her life, had ever told her she was beautiful; and it is a well-known fact, that the more we doubt our possession of any particular attraction, the more agreeable is every assurance from others that such attraction does exist.

Thus there is an endless train of mischief let in upon the minds of the young and inexperienced, by what men are accustomed to regard in the light of harmless pleasantry, or as an almost necessary embellishment to polished manners. It may be said that the plain woman has her glass, to which she can refer for never-failing truth. It is true, she has; but there is a vast difference between looking for what we do not wish to see, and for what we do. Besides which, when a young plain woman first mixes in society, she sees the high distinction which mere beauty obtains for its possessor, and she finds herself comparatively neglected and forgotten. In her home she is doubtless valued in proportion to her merits; but in company, what avail the kind and generous heart which beats within her bosom, the bright intelligence of her mind, the cordial response she would offer in return for kindness, the gratitude, the generous feeling which animate her soul? Who, in all that busy circle, cares to call forth

any of these? Nay, so little do all or any of them avail her in society, that she begins in time to suspect she is personally repulsive; and what woman of sensitive or delicate feelings ever conceived this idea of herself, without experiencing, along with it, a strange sense of loneliness and destitution, as if excluded from the fellowship of social kindness—shut out from the pale of the lovely, and the beloved? If, then, the treacherous voice of man but whispers in her ear, that these hard thoughts about herself have no foundation, who can wonder if she is found too ready to “lay the flattering unction” to her heart? or who can wonder if the equanimity of her mind becomes disturbed by a recurrence of those painful doubts, occasionally to be dispelled by a recurrence of that flattery too?

To young women thus circumstanced, I would affectionately say—Beware! Beware of the unquiet thoughts, the disappointment, the rivalry, the vain competition, the fruitless decoration, and all that train of evils which ensue from vacillating between the two extremes of flattering hopes and mortified ambition. Go home, then, and consult your mirror; no falsehood will be there. Go home, and find, as you have often done before, that even without beauty, you can make the fireside circle happy there; nor deem your lot a hard one. From many dangers attendant upon beauty you are safe, from many sorrows you are exempt; above all, should you become a wife, from that which is, perhaps, the greatest calamity in woman’s history, the loss of her husband’s love, because the charms for which alone he valued her, have vanished. This never can be your experience, and so far you are blest.

If personal beauty be so great a good as men persuade us it is, how important does it become to know that there is no certain way of preserving this treasure but by a strict regard to health! We hear of the beauty of extreme delicacy, of the beauty of a slight hectic, and sometimes of the beauty of constitutional debility and languor, but who ever ventured to speak of the beauty of disease? And yet, all these, if not treated judiciously,

or checked in time, will infallibly become disease. On the other hand, we hear of vulgar health, of an unlady-like bloom, and of too much strength, giving an air of independence unbecoming to the female character. Sincerely wishing that all who hold these sentiments may make the best use of the advantages of illness, when it does fall to their lot, we will pass on to consider the advantages of health as one of the greatest of earthly blessings.

Perfect health was the portion of our first parents while Paradise was yet untrodden, save by the steps of sinless men and angels. Since that time, it has become rarely the experience of any of the human family to be altogether exempt from disease; yet, so much are the sufferings of illness mitigated by the skill of modern science, and the comforts of civilized life, that a slight degree of bodily indisposition is looked upon as an evil scarcely worth the pains which any systematic means of remedy would require.

It is only when health is lost, and lost beyond the hope of regaining it, that we become sensible of its real value. It is then we tax the ingenuity of the physician, and the patience of the nurse, to bring us back, if only so near as to stand upon the verge of that region of happiness from which we are expelled. It is then we see the folly of those who play upon the brink of the precipice which separates this beautiful and blessed region from the troubled waters below. It is then we resign our wealth, our friends, our country, and our home, in the hope of purchasing this treasure. It is then we feel that, although, when in the possession of health, we neglected many opportunities of kindness, benevolence, and general usefulness, yet when deprived of this blessing, we would kneel at the footstool of mercy, to ask those opportunities again, in order that we may use them better.

In early youth, however, little of this knowledge can be experimentally acquired. Little does the pampered child of fond and indulgent parents know what illness is to the poor and the destitute; or what it may be to

in her mother's hand is cold and helpless tomb, and when her own head is sheltered by a father's roof. Thus young girls so often practising a career of recklessness, and contempt of duty, even encouraging, I will not say, a degree of delicacy, feebleness, inability to bodily ailments, which, if they are not accustomed to the kindest attention, could be the last calamity they would bring upon themselves. How impossible is it for such individuals to remember the constitution of the body, as well as of the mind, is, in a good degree, of forming; that the season of youth is the time when the seeds of disease are generally sown; and that no one thus tanced, can suffer a loss of health without inflicting the penalty of anxious sorrow, and, frequently, of unremitting persecution, upon those by whom she is loved, or beloved!

Useful and ill-disciplined young women to think it gives them an attractive look, like an absence of selfishness, indifferent about the preservation of health; and thus they indulge the most capriciousness with respect to their diet, sometimes refusing altogether to eat at times, and eating most improperly; or, running about upon wet grass with shoes, as if they really wished to take no difference between their summer and their winter clothing, or casting aside warm dress for an evening party; or, to take medicine when necessary, or to take unsanctioned by their parents, or their advisers; all these they appear to regard as most engaging features in the female character. But there are those who follow all this such conduct is, in reality, the consummate selfishness, because it only produces the effect of making them objects of much necessary attention, and creating an endless catalogue of troubles and anxieties upon their friends. How soon the stern discipline of life inflict its own punishment for this folly! but, unfortunately, not enough, in all instances, to stop the

progress of the host of maladies which are thus produced.

Let it not for a moment be supposed, that I would recommend to young women oversolicitude on the score of health; for I believe nothing is more likely than this to induce real or fancied indisposition. Neither would I presume to interfere with the proper province of the physician; yet am I strongly disposed to think, that if the rules I am about to lay down were faithfully adhered to, that worthy and important personage would much less frequently be found beside the couch where the bloom of youthful beauty wastes away.

My first rule is, to let one hour every day, generally two, and sometimes three, be spent in taking exercise in the open air, either on horseback, or on foot. Let no weather prevent this; for, with strong boots, waterproof cloak, and umbrella, there are few situations where an hour's walk, at some time or other of the day, may not be accomplished; and when the air is damp, there is sometimes more need for exercise, than when it is dry. I am perfectly aware of the unpleasantness of all this, unless when regarded as a duty; I am aware, too, that where the health is good, it appears, at times, a work of supererogation; but I am aware, also, of the difference there is in the state both of mind and body, between sitting in the house, or by the fire all day, and taking, during some part of it, a brisk and healthy walk.

How often have I seen a restless, weary, discontented being, moving from chair to chair, finding comfort in none, and tired of every employment; with contracted and uneasy brow, complexion dry and gray, and eyes that looked as if their very vision was scorched up;—how often have I seen such a being come in from a winter's walk, with the countenance of a perfect Hebe, with the energy of an invigorated mind beaming forth from eyes as beautiful as clear, and with the benevolence of a young warm heart reflected in the dimpling freshness of a sunny smile! How pleasant is it then to resume the half-finished work—how refreshing the

social meal—how inviting the seat beside the glowing hearth—how frank and free the intercourse with those who form the circle there ! And if such be the effect of one single walk, how beneficial must be that of habitual exercise, upon the condition both of mind and body !

Were it possible for human calculation to sum up all the evils resulting from want of exercise, the catalogue would be too appalling. All those disorders which in common parlance, and for want of a more definite and scientific name, are called bilious, (and, truly, their name is legion,) are mainly to be attributed to this cause. All headaches, want of appetite, pains under the shoulders, side-ache, cold feet, and irregular circulation, provided there is no positive disease, might, in time, be remedied by systematic attention to exercise. Of its effect upon the temper, and the general tone of the mind, we have yet to speak ; but certain I am, that no actual calamity inflicted upon woman, ever brought with it more severe or extended sufferings, than those which result from the habitual neglect of exercise.

My next rule is, to retire early to rest. Wherever I meet with a pale, melancholy young woman, highly nervous, easily excited, unequal in her temper ; in the early part of the day languid, listless, discontented, and fit for nothing,—but when evening comes on, disposed for conversation, brisk and lively ; I feel morally certain, that such a one is in the habit of sitting up late—perhaps of making herself extremely interesting to her friends beside the midnight fire ; but I know, also, that such a one is eminently in danger of having recourse to stimulants to keep up the activity of her mind ; and that during more than half her life—during the morning, that most valuable portion of every day—she is of little value to society ; and well will it be for her friends and near connections, if her listlessness and discontent do not render her companionship worse than valueless to them.

My next rule is to eat regularly, so far as it can be done conveniently to others—at regular times, and in regular quantities ; and

this I believe to be of more consequence than to be very particular about the nature of the food partaken of, provided only it is simple and nutritious. I know that with a sickly appetite, or where the constitution is under the influence of disease, it is impossible to do this ; but much may be done while in a state of health, by striving against that capricious abstinence from food, especially in the early part of the day, which by certain individuals is thought rather lady-like and becoming. I doubt not but this may be the case, so far as it is becoming to look pale, and lady-like to be the object of attention—to be pleaded with by kind friends, and pitied by strangers ; but the wisdom and the utility of this system is what I am not the less disposed to call in question.

It is a great evil in society, that the necessary act of eating is looked upon too much as a luxury and an indulgence. If we regarded it more as a simple act, the frequent recurrence of which was rendered necessary by the absolute wants of the body, we should be more disposed to consider the proper regulation of this act, as a duty within our power to neglect or attend to. We should consequently think little of each particular portion of food set before us, and the business of eating would then be despatched as a regular habit, attention to which could afford no very high degree of excitement or felicity, while at the same time it could not be neglected without serious injury.

My next rule is, to dress according to the season ; a rule so simple and so obvious in its relation to health, as to need no comment.

Thus far my remarks have applied only to the subject of health, where it is enjoyed. The loss of health is a theme of far deeper interest, as it separates us from many of the enjoyments of this world, and brings us nearer to the borders of the world which is to come.

It is a remarkable feature in connection with the constitution of woman, that she is capable of enduring, with patience and fortitude, far beyond that of the stronger sex, almost every degree of bodily suffering. It is

true, that she is more accustomed to such suffering than man ; it is true also that a slight degree of indisposition makes less difference in her amusements and occupations than in his. Still there is a strength and a beauty in her character, when laboring under bodily affliction, of which the heroism of fiction affords but a feeble imitation. Wherever woman is the most flattered, courted, and indulged, she is the least admirable ; but in seasons of trial her highest excellences shine forth ; and how encouraging is the reflection to the occupant of a sick-chamber, that while the busy circles, in which she was wont to move, close up her vacant place, and pursue their cheerful rounds as gaily as when she was there—that while excluded from participation in the merry laugh, the social meeting, and the cordial intercourse of former friends, she is not excluded from more intimate communion with those who still remain ; that she can still exercise a moral and religious influence over them, and deepen the impression of her affectionate and earnest counsel, by exhibiting the Christian graces of patience under suffering, and resignation to the will of God.

Yes, there are many enjoyments in the chamber of sickness—enjoyments derived from the absence of temptation, from proofs of disinterested affection, and from the unspeakable privilege of having the vanity of earthly things, and the realities of the eternal world, brought near, and kept continually in view. How are we then made acquainted with the hollowness of mere profession ! How much that appeared to us plausible and attractive when we mingled in society, is now stripped of its false coloring, and rendered repulsive and odious ! while, on the other hand, how much that was lightly esteemed by the world in which we moved, is discovered to be worthy of our admiration and esteem ! How much of human love, where we most calculated upon finding it, has escaped from our hold ! but then, how much is left to succor and console us, from those upon whose kindness we feel to have but little claim !

Experience is often said to be the only true teacher ; but illness often crowds an age of experience into the compass of a few short days. Often while engaged in the active avocations of life, involved in its contending interests, and led captive by its allurements, we wish in vain that a just balance could be maintained between the value of the things of time and of eternity. It is the greatest privilege of illness, that, if rightly regarded, it adjusts this balance, and keeps it true. From the bed of sickness, we look back upon the business, which, a short time ago, absorbed our very being. What is it then ? A mere struggle for the food and clothing of a body about to mingle with the dust. We look back at the pleasures we have left. What are they ? The sport of truant children, when they should have been learning to be wise and good. We look back upon the objects which engaged our affections. How is it ! Have the stars all vanished from our heaven ? Have the flowers all faded from our earth ? How can it be ! Alas ! our affections have been misplaced. We have not loved supremely only what was lovely in the sight of God : and merciful, most merciful is the warning voice, not yet too late, to tell us that He who formed the human heart, has an unquestionable right to claim his own.

I am not one of those who would speak of religion as especially calculated for the chamber of sickness, and the bed of death ; because I believe it is equally important to choose religion as our portion in illness, as in health—in the bloom of youth, as on the border of the grave. I believe also, that in reality, that being is in as awful a condition, who lives on from day to day in the possession of all temporal blessings, without religion, as he who pines upon a bed of suffering, without it. But if the necessity of religion be the same, its consolations are far more powerfully felt, when deprived by sickness of every other stay ; and often do the darkened chamber, and the weary couch, display such evidence of the power and the condescension of Divine love, that even the stranger

acknowledges it is better to go the house of mourning than of feasting.

It is when the feeble step has trod for the last time upon nature's verdant carpet, when the dim eye has looked its last upon the green earth and sunny sky, when the weary body has almost ached and pined its last, when human skill can do no more, and kindness has offered its last relief—it is then, that we see the perfect adaptation of the promises of the gospel to feeble nature's utmost need; and while we contemplate the depths of the Redeemer's love, and hear in anticipation the welcome of angels to the pardoned sinner, and see upon his faded lips the smile of everlasting peace, we look from that solemn scene once more into the world, and wonder at the madness and the folly of its infatuated slaves.

All these are privileges, if only to feel them as a mere spectator; and never ought such scenes to be avoided on account of the painful sympathy which the sight of human suffering naturally occasions. Young people are apt to think it is not their business to wait upon the sick, that their seniors are better fitted for such service, that they shall make some serious mistake, or create some inconvenience by their want of knowledge; or at all events, they hold themselves excused. Yet is there many a sweet young girl, who, in consequence of family affliction, becomes initiated in these deep mysteries of Christian charity, before her willing step has lost the playful elasticity of childhood; and never did the maturer virtues of the female character appear less lovely from such precocious exercise. I should rather say, there was a tenderness of feeling, and a power of sympathy derived from early acquaintance with human suffering, which remains with woman till the end of life, and constitutes alike the charm of youth and the attraction of old age.

I have dwelt long upon the privileges of illness, both to the sufferer and her friends, because I believe that all which is noble, and sweet, and patient, and disinterested in woman's nature, is often thus called forth; as

well as all that is most encouraging in the exemplification of the Christian character. But I must again advert to

"Woman in our hours of ease;"

and here I am sorry to say, we sometimes find a fretfulness and petulance under the infliction of slight bodily ailments, which are as much at variance with the moral dignity of woman, as opposed to her religious influence. The root of the evil, however, lies not so often in her impatience, as in a deeper secret of her nature. It lies most frequently in what I am compelled to acknowledge as the besetting sin of woman—her desire to be an object of attention. From this desire, how many little coughs, slight headaches, sudden pains, attacks of faintness, and symptoms of feebleness are complained of, which, if alone, or in the company of those whose attentions are not agreeable, would scarcely occupy a thought. Yet it is astonishing how such habits gain ground, and remain with those who have indulged them in youth, long after such complaints have ceased to call forth a single kind attention, or to engage a single patient ear.

Youth is the only time to prevent this habit fixing itself upon the character; and it might be a wholesome truth for all women to bear in mind, that although politeness may sometimes compel their friends to appear to listen, nothing is really so wearisome to others, as frequent and detailed accounts of our own little ailments. It is good, therefore, whenever temptations arise to make these trifling grievances the subject of complaint, to think of the poor, and the really afflicted. It is good to visit them also, so far as it may be suitable in their seasons of trial, in order that we may go home, ashamed before our families, and ashamed in the sight of God, that our comparatively slight trials should excite a single murmuring thought.

Besides, if there were no other check upon these habitual complainers, surely the cheerfulness of home might have some effect; for who can be happy seated beside a companion who is always in "excruciating pain," or

who fancies herself so ! There are, besides, many alleviations to temporary suffering, which it is not only lawful, but expedient to adopt. Many interesting books may be read, many pleasant kinds of work may be done, during a season of slight indisposition ; while on the other hand, every little pain is made worse by dwelling upon it, and especially by doing nothing else.

The next consideration which occurs in connection with these views of health, is that of temper ; and few young persons, I believe, are aware how much the one is dependent upon the other. Want of exercise, indigestion, and many other causes originating in the state of the body, have a powerful effect in destroying the sweetness of the temper ; while habitual exercise, regular diet, and occasional change of air, are among the most certain means of restoring the temper from any temporary derangement.

Still, there are constitutional tendencies of mind, as well as body, which seriously affect the temper, and which remain with us to the end of life, as our blessing or our bane ; just in proportion as they are overruled by our own watchfulness and care, operating in connection with the work of religion in the heart.

It would require volumes, rather than pages, to give any distinct analysis of temper, so various are the characteristics it assumes, so vast its influence upon social and domestic happiness. We will, therefore, in the present instance, confine our attention to a few important facts, in connection with this subject, which it is of the utmost consequence that the young should bear in mind.

In the first place, ill-temper should always be regarded as a disease, both in ourselves and others ; and as such, instead of either irritating or increasing it, we should rather endeavor to subdue the symptoms of the disease by the most careful and unremitting efforts. A bad temper, although the most pitiable of all infirmities, from the misery it entails upon its possessor, is almost invariably opposed by harshness, severity, or contempt. It is true, that all symptoms of dis-

ease exhibited by a bad temper, have a strong tendency to call forth the same in ourselves ; but this arises in great measure from not looking at the case as it really is. If a friend or a relative, for instance, is afflicted with the gout, how carefully do we walk past his footstool, how tenderly do we remove every thing which can increase his pain, how softly do we touch the affected part ! And why should we not exercise the same kind feeling towards a brother or a sister afflicted with a bad temper, which of all human maladies is unquestionably the greatest ?

I know it is difficult—nay, almost impossible, to practise this forbearance towards a bad temper, when not allied to a generous heart—when no atonement is afterwards offered for the pain which has been given, and when no evidence exists of the offender being so much as conscious of deserving blame. But when concession is made, when tears of penitence are wept, and when, in moments of returning confidence, that luckless tendency of temper is candidly confessed, and sincerely bewailed ; when all the different acts committed under its influence, are acknowledged to have been wrong, how complete ought to be the reconciliation thus begun, and how zealous our endeavors for the future to avert the consequences of this sad calamity ! Indeed, if those who are not equally tempted to the sins of temper, and who think and speak harshly of us for such transgressions, could know the agony they entail upon those who commit them—the yearning of an affectionate heart towards a friend thus estranged—the humiliation of a proud spirit after having thus exposed its weakness—the bitter reflection, that not one of all those burning words we uttered can ever be recalled—that they have eaten like a canker into some old attachment, and stamped with ingratitude the aching brow, whose fever is already almost more than it can bear ;—oh ! could our calm-tempered friends become acquainted with all this—with the tears and the prayers to which the overburdened soul gives vent, when no eye seeth its affliction, surely they would pity our infirmity ; and not only pity, but assist.

These, however, are among the deep things of human experience, never to be clearly revealed, or fully understood, until that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open. It is perhaps more to our present purpose, to consider what is the effect upon others, of encouraging wrong tempers in ourselves. Young people are apt to think what they do, of little importance, because they are perhaps the youngest in the family, or at least too young to have any influence. They should remember that no one is too young to be disagreeable, nor too insignificant to annoy. A fretful child may disturb the peace of a whole household, and an ill-tempered young woman carries about with her an atmosphere of repulsion wherever she goes. The moment she enters a room, where a social circle are enjoying themselves, conversation either ceases or drags on heavily, as if a stranger or an enemy were near; and kindly thoughts, which the moment before would have found frank and free expression, are suppressed, from the instinctive feeling that she can take no part in them. Each one of the company, in short, feels the worse for her presence, a sense of contraction seizes every heart, a cloud falls upon every countenance; and so powerful are the sympathies of our nature, and so rapidly does that which is evil extend its contaminating influence, that all this will sometimes be experienced, when not a word has been spoken by the victim of ill-temper.

It is easy to perceive when most young women are out of temper, even without the interchange of words. The pouting lip, the door shut with violence, the thread suddenly snapped, the work twitched aside or thrown down, are indications of the real state of the mind, at least as unwise, as they are unlovely. Others who are not guilty of these absurdities, will render themselves still more annoying, by a captiousness of conduct, most difficult to bear with any moderate degree of patience; by conversing only upon humiliating or unpleasant subjects, complaining incessantly about grievances which all have equally to bear, prolonging disputes about the

merest trifles beyond all bounds of reason and propriety; and by finally concluding with a direct reproach for some offence which had far better have been spoken of candidly at first.

But there would be no end to the task of tracing out the symptoms of this malady. Suffice it that a naturally bad temper, or even a moderate one badly disciplined, is the greatest enemy to the happiness of a family which can be admitted beneath any respectable roof—the greatest hindrance to social intercourse—the most fatal barrier against moral and religious improvement.

Like all other evils incident to man, a bad temper, if long encouraged, and thoroughly rooted in the constitution, becomes in time impossible to be eradicated. In youth it is comparatively easy to stem the rising tide of sullenness, petulance, or passion; but when the tide has been allowed to gain ground so as to break down every barrier, until its desolating waters habitually overflow the soul, no human power can drive them back, or restore the beauty, freshness, and fertility which once existed there.

No longer, then, let inexperienced youth believe this tide of evil can be stayed at will. The maniac may say, "I am now calm, I will injure you no more;" yet, the frenzied fit will come to-morrow, when he will turn again and rend you. In the same way, the victim of ungoverned temper may even beg forgiveness for the past, and promise, with the best intentions, to offend no more; but how shall a daughter in her mood of kindness heal the wound her temper has inflicted on a mother's heart, or convince her parent it will be the last? How shall the woman, whose temper has made desolate her household hearth, win back the peace and confidence she has destroyed? How shall the wife, though she would give all her bridal jewels for that purpose, restore the links her temper has rudely snapped asunder in the chain of conjugal affection?

No, there are no other means than those adopted and pursued in youth, by which to overcome this foe to temporal and eternal

happiness. Nor let the task appear too difficult. There is one curious fact in connection with the subject, which it may be encouraging to my young friends to remember. Strangers never provoke us—at least, not in any degree proportionate to the provocations of our near and familiar connections. They may annoy us by their folly, or stay too long when they call, or call at inconvenient times; but how sweetly do we smile at all their remarks, how patiently do we bear all their allusions, compared with those of our family circle! The fact is, they have less power over us, and for this reason, because they do not know us so well. Half the provocations we experience from common conversation, and more than half the point of every bitter taunt, arise out of some intended or imagined allusion to what has been known or supposed of us before. If a parent speaks harshly to us in years of maturity, we think he assumes too much the authority which governed our childhood; if a brother would correct our folly, we are piqued and mortified to think how often he must have seen it; if a sister blames us for any trifling error, we know what her condemnation of our whole conduct must be, if all our faults are blamed in the same proportion. Thus it is that our near connections have a hold upon us, which strangers cannot have; for, besides the cases in which the offence is merely imagined, there are but too many in which past folly or transgression is made the subject of present reproach. And thus the evil grows, as year after year is added to the catalogue of the past, until our nearest connections have need of the utmost forbearance to avoid touching upon any tender or forbidden point.

Now, it is evident that youth must be comparatively exempt from this real or imaginary source of pain; just in proportion as the past is of less importance to them, and as fewer allusions can be made to the follies or the errors of their former lives. Thus the season of youth has greatly the advantage over that of maturer age, in cultivating that evenness of temper which enables its pos-

essor to pass pleasantly along the stream of life, without unnecessarily ruffling its own course, or that of others.

The next point we have to take into account in the right government of temper, is the important truth, that habitual cheerfulness is a duty we owe to our friends and to society. We all have our little troubles, if we choose to brood over them, and even youth is not exempt; but the habit is easily acquired of setting them aside for the sake of others, of evincing a willingness to join in general conversation, to smile at what is generally entertaining, and even to seek out subjects for remark which are likely to interest and please. We have no more right to inflict our moodiness upon our friends, than we have to wear in their presence our soiled or cast-off clothes; and, certainly, the latter is the least insulting and disgraceful of the two.

A cheerful temper—not occasionally, but habitually cheerful—is a quality which no wise man would be willing to dispense with in choosing a wife. It is like a good fire in winter, diffusive and genial in its influence, and always approached with a confidence that it will comfort, and do us good. Attention to health is one great means of maintaining this excellence unimpaired, and attention to household affairs is another. The state of body which women call bilious, is most inimical to habitual cheerfulness; and that which girls call having nothing to do, but which I should call idleness, is equally so. In a former part of this chapter, I have strongly recommended exercise as the first rule for preserving health; but there is an exercise in domestic usefulness, which, without superseding that in the open air, is highly beneficial to the health, both of mind and body, inasmuch as it adds to other benefits, the happiest of all sensations, that of having rendered some assistance, or done some good.

How the daughters of England—those who have but few servants, or, perhaps, only one—can sit in their fathers' homes with folded hands, when any great domestic movement

is going on, and not endeavor to assist, is a mystery I have tried in vain to solve; especially when, by so doing, they become habitually listless, weary, and unhappy; and when, on the other hand, the prompt and willing domestic assistant is almost invariably distinguished by the characteristics of energy and cheerfulness. Let me entreat my young readers, if they ever feel a tendency to causeless melancholy, if they are afflicted with cold feet and headache, but, above all, with impatience and irritability, so that they can scarcely make a pleasant reply when spoken to, let me entreat them to make trial of the system I am recommending; not simply to run into the kitchen and trifle with the servants, but to set about doing something that will add to the general comfort of the family, and that will, at the same time, relieve some member of that family of a portion of daily toil.

I fear it is a very unromantic conclusion to come to, but my firm conviction is, that half the miseries of young women, and half their ill tempers, might be avoided by habits of domestic activity; because (I repeat the fact again) there is no sensation more cheering and delightful, than the conviction of having been useful; and I have generally found young people particularly susceptible of this pleasure.

A willing temper, then, is the great thing to be attained; a temper that does not object, that does not resist, that does not hold itself excused. A temper subdued to an habitual acquiescence with duty, is the only temper worth calling good; and this may be the portion of all who desire so great a blessing, who seek it in youth, and who adopt the only means of making it their own—watchfulness and prayer.

I have said nothing of the operation of love, as it relates to the subject of this chapter; but it must be understood to be pre-eminently the life-spring of our best endeavors in the regulation both of health and temper, since none can fail in the slightest degree in either of these points, without materially affecting the happiness of others.

CHAPTER VII.

SOCIETY, FASHION, AND LOVE OF DISTINCTION.

SOCIETY is often to the daughters of a family, what business or a profession is to the sons; at least so far as regards the importance attached to it, and the opportunity it affords of failure or success. Society! what a capacious and dignified idea this word presents to the girl just entering upon womanhood! What a field for action and sensation! What an arena for the display of all her accomplishments! How much that is now done, thought, and uttered, has society for its object! How much is left undone, for the sake of society! But let us pause a moment, and ask what society is. Is it a community of tried and trusted friends, united together by the ties of perfect love? Listen to the remarks of those, even of your own family, who return from the evening party, or the morning call. Is it a community of beings with whom mind is all in all, and intellectual improvement the purpose for which they meet? Observe the preparations that are made—the dress, the furniture, the food, the expense that is lavished upon these. Is it a community who even love to meet, and who really enjoy the social hours they spend together? Ask them in what mood or temper they enter upon the fatigues of the evening, or how often they wish that some event would occur to render their presence unnecessary.

There is, however, one class of beings, who generally go into society with no want of inclination, but who rather esteem no trouble too great which is the means of bringing them in contact with it, or which enables them to pass with credit the ordeal which society presents. This class of beings consists of young women who have not had experience enough to know what society really is, or what is the place assigned to them by the unanimous opinion of society, in the circles with which they exchange visits. What an event to them is an evening party! One would think each of the young aspirants to distinction expected to be the centre of a cir-

cle, so intense is the interest exhibited by every act of preparation. The consequence of all this, is a more than ordinary degree of causeless depression on the following day, or else an equal degree of causeless elevation, arising perhaps out of some foolish attention, or flattering remark, which has been repeated to half the ladies in the room.

Of all the passions which take possession of the female breast, a passion for society is one of the most inimical to domestic enjoyment. Yet, how often does this exist in connection with an amiable exterior! It is not easy to say, whether we ought most to pity or to blame a woman who lives for society—a woman who reserves all her good spirits, all her becoming dresses, her animated looks, her interesting conversation, her bland behavior, her smiles, her forbearance, her gentleness for society—what imposition does she practise upon those who meet her there! Follow the same individual home, she is impatient, fretful, sullen, weary, oppressed with headache, uninterested in all that passes around her, and dreaming only of the last evening's excitement, or of what may constitute the amusement of the next; while the mortification of her friends at home, is increased by the contrast her behavior exhibits in the two different situations, and her expenditure upon comparative strangers, of feelings to which they consider themselves as having a natural and inalienable right.

As a cure for this passion, I would propose a few remarks, founded both on observation and experience. In the first place, then, we seldom find that society affords us more pleasing or instructive intercourse than awaits us at home; and as to kindly feeling towards ourselves, if not excited in our nearest connections, how can we expect it from those who know us less, without having practised upon them some deception?

In the next place, we ought never to forget our own extreme insignificance in society. Indeed, it may be taken as a rule with young people in ordinary cases, that one half of the persons they meet in society are not aware of their having been present, nor even con-

scious of the fact of their existence; that another half of the remaining number have seen them without any favorable impression; that another half of those who still remain, have seen them with rather unfavorable feelings than otherwise; while, of those who remain beyond these, the affectionate feelings, indulgence, and cordial interest, can be as nothing, compared with what they might enjoy at home.

"How can this be?" exclaims the young visitor, "when so many persons look pleased to see me, when so many invitations are sent me, when some persons pay me such flattering compliments, and others appear so decidedly struck with my appearance?" I should be truly sorry to do any thing to cool down the natural warmth and confidence of youth; but, in such cases, my rule for judging is a very simple one, depending upon the result of the following inquiries:—What is the proportion of persons *you* have noticed in the same company? What is the proportion of those by whom *you* have felt yourself repelled? What is the proportion of those *you* have really admired? and the proportion of those to whom *you* have been attracted by sympathy, or affection? Ask yourselves these questions, and remember, that whatever may be the flattering aspect of society, you have no right to expect to receive, in admiration, or good-will, more than you give.

There is another class of young women, who appear to think the only reason for their being invited in society, is, that another place may be occupied, another chair filled, and another knife and fork employed; for as to any effort they make in return for the compliment of inviting them, they might, to all intents and purposes, have been at home. Now, where persons cannot, or dare not, converse—or where that which alone deserves the name of conversation is not suited to the habits or the ways of thinking of those who have been at the trouble of inviting guests—I am a great advocate for cheerful, easy, social chat; provided only, it gives place the instant that something better worth listening to is commenced. That all ingenious, warm-

hearted, unaffected young women, can chat, and some of them very pleasantly too, witness their moments of unrestrained confidence in the company of their friends. There is, then, no excuse for those who go into company, and return from it, without having contributed in any way to the enjoyment of the party they had been invited to meet.

All young persons, however insignificant, must occasionally meet the eye of the mistress of the house where they are visiting, and then is the time to say something expressive of interest in her, or hers; such as inquiring for some absent member of the family: or, at any rate, proving in some way or other, that she and her household have interests with which you are not wholly unacquainted.

One of the most genuine, and at the same time one of the most pleasing compliments ever paid, is that of proving to those we visit, or receive as visitors, that we have been previously aware of their existence. There are many delicate ways of doing this; and while it injures no one, it seldom fails to afford a certain degree of gratification. Social chat, is that which sets people at liberty to talk on their favorite subjects, whatever they may be. In society, too, we meet with a large proportion of persons, who want listeners; and the young, who cannot be supposed to have amassed so large a sum of information as others, ought to consider themselves as peculiarly called upon to fill this respectable department in society, remembering at the same time, that the office of a good listener can never be that of a perfectly silent one. There must be occasionally an animated and intelligent response, intervals of attentive and patient hearing, with a succession of questions, earnestly, but modestly put, and arising naturally out of the subject, to render the part of the listener of any value in general conversation. The rapid response effectually repels; the flat and uninterested expression of countenance soon wearies; and the question not adapted to the subject cuts short the narration.

Let me not, however, be understood to commend the mere affectation of interest, or

attention; though perfectly aware that such affectation is the current coin, by which the good-will of society is generally purchased. My view of the case is this—that the absence of vanity and selfishness in our own feelings, and benevolence towards others, will induce a real interest in every thing which concerns them, at least, so far as it may occupy the conversation of an evening; and are we not as much bound in duty to be social, frank, and talkative to little-minded and commonplace persons, provided they have been at the pains to invite and to entertain us, as if they were more intellectual, or more distinguished? Besides, how often do we find in conversation with such persons, that they are able to give us much useful information, which individuals of a higher grade of intellect would never have condescended to give; and, after all, there is a vast sum of practical and moral good effected by persons of this description, whose unvarnished details of common things afford us clearer views of right and wrong, than more elaborate statements.

I have said, already, that the indulgence of mere chat should never be carried too far. In the society of intelligent and enlightened men, nothing can be more at variance with good taste, than for women to occupy the attention of the company with their own little affairs; but especially when serious conversation is carried on, no woman of right feeling would wish to interrupt it with that which is less important. Nor ought this humble substitute for conversation, which I have recommended to those who cannot do better, or appreciate what is higher, on any occasion to be considered as the chief end at which to aim in society. Women possess pre-eminently the power of conversing well, if this power is rightly improved and exercised; but as this subject is one which occupies so large a portion of a previous work,* I will only add, that my opinion remains the same as therein expressed, that the talent of conversation is one which it is woman's especial

* The Women of England.

duty to cultivate, because the duties of conversation are among those for which she is peculiarly responsible.

When we think of what society might be to the young, and to the old, it becomes a painful task to speak to the inexperienced, the trusting, and the ardent, of what it is. When we think of the seasons of mental and spiritual refreshment, which might thus be enjoyed, the interchange of mutual trust and kindness, the awakening of new ideas, the correction of old ones, the sweeping away of prejudice, and the establishment of truth, the general enlargement of thought, the extension of benevolence, and the increase of sympathy, confidence, and good faith, which might thus be brought about among the families of mankind; we long to send forth the young and the joyous spirit, buoyant with the energies of untried life, and warm with the generous flow of unchecked feeling, to exercise each growing faculty, and prove each genuine impulse, upon the fair and flowery field which society throws open, alike for action, for feeling, and for thought.

But, alas! such is society as it now exists, that no mother venturing upon this experiment, would receive back to the peaceful nest the wing so lately fledged unruffled by its flight, the snowy breast unstained, or the beating heart as true as when it first went forth, elated with the glowing hope of finding in society what it never yet was rich enough to yield.

An old and long-established charge is brought against society for its flattery and its falsehood, and we go on from year to year complaining in the same strain; those who have expected most, and have been the most deceived, complaining in the bitterest terms. But, suppose the daughters of England should now determine that they would bring about a reformation in society, how easily would this be done! for, whether they know it or not, they have the social morals of their country in their power. If the excellent, but humble maxim, "Let each one mend one," were acted up to in this case, we should have no room left to find fault with others, for all

would be too busily and too well occupied in examining their own motives, and regulating their own conduct, to make any calculations upon what might be done or left undone by others.

In the first place, each young woman acting upon this rule, would live for home, trusting that society would take care of its own interests. She would, however, enter into it as a social duty, rather than a personal gratification, and she would do this with kind and generous feelings, determined to think the best she could of her fellow-creatures, and where she could not understand their motives, to give them credit for good ones. She would mix with society, not for the purpose of shining before others, but of adding her share to the general enjoyment; she would consider every one whom she met there, as having equal claims upon her attentions; but her sympathies would be especially called forth by the diffident, the unattractive, or the neglected. Above all, she would remember that for the opportunities thus afforded her, of doing or receiving good, she would have to render an account as a Christian, and a woman; that for every wrong feeling not studiously checked, for every falsehood however trifling, or calculated to please, for every moral truth kept back or disguised for want of moral courage to divulge it, for every uncharitable insinuation, for every idle or amusing jest at the expense of religious principle, and for every chance omitted of supporting the cause of virtue, however unpopular, or discountenancing vice, however well received, her situation was that of a responsible being, of whom an account of all the good capable of being derived from opportunities like these, would be required.

Need we question for a moment whether such are the feelings, and such the resolutions, of those who enter into society in general? We doubt not but some are thus influenced, and that they have their reward; but with others, old associations and old habits are strong, and they think that one can do nothing against the many; and thus they

wait, and wish things were otherwise, but never set about the reformation themselves. Yet, surely these are times for renovated effort on the part of women, to whom the interests of society belong; for let men rule, as they unquestionably have a right to do, in the senate, the camp, and the court; it is women whose sentiments and feelings give tone to society, and society which in its turn influences the sentiments and feelings of mankind. Each generation, as it arises, matures, and consolidates into another series of social intercourse, bears the impress which society has stamped upon the last; and so powerful is the influence thus derived, that the laws of a nation would be useless in defence of virtue, if the voice of society was raised against it.

How often has the tender and anxious mother had to deplore this influence upon the minds of her children! Until they mingled with society, they were respectful, attentive, and obedient to her injunctions, confiding implicitly in the rectitude and the reasonableness of her requirements. But society soon taught them that the views of their parents were unenlightened, old-fashioned, or absurd; that even the motives for enforcing them might not be altogether pure; and that none who mixed in good society, ought to submit to regulations so childish and humiliating.

If then, such be the influence of society, how important is it that so powerful an agent should be engaged on the side of virtue and of truth! And that it already is so in many most important cases, I acknowledge, to the honor of my country, believing that the general tone of society is highly favorable to that high moral standard, for which England is pre-eminent over every nation of the world. I allude particularly to the preservation of the character of woman from the slightest taint. The rules, or rather the opinions of society, as to what is correct or incorrect in female conduct, extending down to the most minute points of behavior, are sometimes considered to be too strict, and even rebelled against by high-spirited ignorant young women as being too severe. But let no one, in her blindness

or temerity, venture upon the slightest transgression of these rules, because in her young wisdom she sees no cause for their existence. Society has good reasons for planting this friendly hedge beside the path of woman, and the day will come when she will be thankful—truly thankful that her own conduct, even in minute and apparently trifling matters, was not left in early life to the decision of her own judgment, or the guidance of her own will.

It ought rather to be the pride of every English woman, that such are the conditions of society in her native land, that whether motherless or undisciplined in her domestic lot, she cannot become a member of good society, or at least retain her place there, without submitting to restrictions; which, while they deprive her of no real gratification, are at once the safeguard of her peace, the support of her moral dignity, and the protection of her influence as a sister, a wife, a mother, and a friend.

Let us then be thankful to society for the good it has done, and is doing, to thousands who have perhaps no watchful eye at home, no warning voice to tell them how far to go, and when to go no further. Nor can we for a moment hesitate to yield our assent to these restrictions imposed upon our sex, when we look at the high moral standing of the women of England, and think how much the tone of society has to do with the maintenance of their true interests. Let us not, however, stop here. If there is so much that is good in society, why should there not be more? Why should there still remain the trifling, the slander, the envy, the low suspicion, the falsehood, the flattery, which ruffle and disfigure the surface of society, and render it too much like a treacherous ocean, on which no well-wisher to the young would desire to trust an untried bark?

A feeling of moral dignity taken with us into society, would be a great preservative against much of this; because it would lift us out of the littleness of low observations, and petty cavillings about dress and manners. A spirit of love would do more, extending

gh all the different channels of forbear-
benevolence, and mutual trust. But
istian spirit would do still more ; be-
it would embrace the whole law of love,
same time that it would impress the
of truth upon all we might venture
or do. Thus might a great moral ref-
be effected, and effected by the
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out presumption, and without display ;
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with ostentation, as they would be fa-
le to the cultivation of all that is estima-
the female character, both at home and
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e of the greatest drawbacks to the good-
nce of society, is the almost unrivalled
r of fashion upon the female mind.
rever civilized society exists, fashion ex-
s her all-pervading influence. All stoop
more or less, and appear to esteem it a
to do so ; while a really fashionable wo-
though both reprobated and ridiculed,
n influence in society which is little less
absolute. Yet, if we would choose out
most worthless, the most contemptible,
least efficient of moral agents, it would
e slave of fashion.

/ the best we can of fashion, it is only an
nary or conventional rule, by which a
n degree of order and uniformity is
ained ; while the successive and fre-
: variations in this rule, are considered
the means of keeping in constant exer-
our arts and manufactures. I am not
al economist enough to know whether
me happy results might not be brought
by purer motives, and nobler means ;
t has always appeared to me one of
reatest of existing absurdities, that a
community of people, differing in com-
on, form, and feature, as widely as the
species can differ, should not only de-
o wear precisely the same kind of dress,
should often labor, strive, and struggle,
ve, envy, and cheat, and spend their own
ance, and often more than they can law-
call their own—to do what ? To obtain

a dress, which is to them most unbecoming,
or an article of furniture wholly unsuited to
themselves and their establishment.

My own idea, and I believe it is founded
upon a long-cherished, and perhaps too ar-
dent admiration of personal beauty, is, that
fashion ought to favor all which is most be-
coming. It is true, we should at first be great-
ly at a loss to know what was becoming, be-
cause we should have the power and the pre-
judice of fashion to contend with ; but there
can be no doubt that individual, as well as
public taste, would be improved by such ex-
ercise, and that our manufactures would in
the end be equally benefited, though for some
time it might be difficult to calculate upon
the probable demand. Nor can I think that
female vanity would be more encouraged
than it now is, by thus consulting personal
and relative fitness ; because the young wo-
man who now goes into company fashiona-
bly disfigured, believes herself to be quite as
beautiful as if she was really so. Neither can
I see that we are not bound to study how to
make the best of our appearance, for the sake
of our friends, as well as how to make the
best of our manners, our furniture, and our
food.

Fashion, however, never takes this into
account. According to her arbitrary law, the
woman of sallow complexion must wear the
same color as the Hebe ; the contracted or
misshapen forehead must be laid as bare as
that which displays the fairest page of beau-
ty ; the form with square and awkward shoul-
ders, must wear the same costume as that
which boasts the contour of the Graces ; and
oh ! most pitiful of all, old age must be
“ pranked up” in the light drapery, the flow-
ers, and the gauds of youth ! In addition to
all this, each one, as an indispensable requi-
site, must possess a waist considerably below
the dimensions which are consistent either
with symmetry or health.

It will be an auspicious era in the experi-
ence of the daughters of England, when they
shall be convinced, that the Grecians had a
higher standard of taste in female beauty,
than that of the shopkeepers and dressma-

kers of London. They will then be willing to believe, that to be within the exact rule of proportion, is as important a deviation from perfect beauty, as to be beyond it; and that nothing which destroys the grace of easy and natural movement, which deprives any bodily function of its necessary exercise, which robs the youthful cheek of its bloom, or, in short, which ungratefully throws back from our possession the invaluable blessing of health, can be consistent with the good taste or right feeling of an amiable, intelligent, or rational woman.

These remarks are applicable, in their fullest force, to every deviation which is sanctioned by fashion, from the strict and holy law of modesty and decorum. And of this most injurious tendency of fashion, how insidious is every encroachment, yet how certain its effect upon the female mind! It is no uncommon thing to hear women express the utmost abhorrence of the costume of some old portrait, who, in the course of a few years, perhaps months, are induced by fashion to adopt, with unblushing satisfaction, an equally, or more objectionable dress.

The young girl cannot too scrupulously shroud her modest feelings from the unsparing test of fashion. The bloom of modesty is soon rubbed off by vulgar contact; but what is thus lost to the young female can never be restored. And let her look to the risk she incurs. What is it? On the one hand, to be thought a little less fashionable than her friends and neighbors—on the other, to be thought a little more exposed than a delicate woman ought to be. Is there any comparison between the two? Or is there one of the daughters of England, who would not rather be known to choose the former?

If possessed of any genuine feeling on these important points, a young woman will know by a kind of instinct, that a bare shoulder protruding into sight, is neither a delicate nor a lovely object; that a dress, either so made, or so put on, as not to look secure and neat, is, to say the least of it, in bad taste; and that the highest standard at which a rightly-minded woman can aim with regard

to dress, is, that it should be becoming, and not conspicuous. In order to secure this last point of excellence, it is unquestionably necessary to conform in some measure to the fashion of the times in which we live, and the circle of society in which we move; yet, surely this may be done to an extent sufficient to avoid the charge of singularity, without the sacrifice either of modesty or good taste.

Whatever may be the beneficial influence of fashion upon the interests of the country at large, its effects upon individual happiness are injurious in proportion to their extent; and in what region of the world, or among what grade of humanity, has not this idol of the gilded shrine, this divinity of lace and ribbons, wielded the sceptre of a sovereign, and asserted her dominion over mankind! All bow before her, though many of her subjects disclaim her title, and profess to despise her authority. Nor is her territory less extensive, because her empire is one of trifles. From the ermine of the monarch to the sandal of the clown; from the bishop's lawn, to the itinerant's cravat; from the hero's mantle, to the mechanic's apron; it is fashion alone which regulates the form, the quality, and the cost.

Fashion is unjustly spoken of as presiding only in the festive dance, the lighted hall, the crowded court. Would that her influence were confined to these alone! but, alas! we find her in the most sedate assemblies, cooling down each tint of coloring that else might glow too warmly, smoothing off excrescences, and rounding angles to one general uniformity of shape and tone. Her task, however, is but a short one here, and she passes on through all the busy haunts of life, neglecting neither high nor low, nor rich nor poor, until she enters the very sanctuary, and bows before the altar, not only walking with the multitude who keep holy day, but bending in sable sorrow over the last and dearest friend committed to the tomb. Yes, there is something monstrous in the thought, that we cannot weep for the dead, but fashion must disguise our grief; and that we cannot stand

before the altar, and pronounce that solemn vow, which the deep heart of woman alone can fully comprehend, but fashion must be especially consulted there.

Yet worse even than all this, is the influence which our love of fashion has upon our servants, and upon the poor. Every Christian woman sees and deprecates the evil, and many wholesome restrictions are laid upon poor girls, in their attendance at Sunday-schools, and other establishments for their instruction; but are not the plans most frequently adopted for the correction of this evil, like telling little children at table that good things are not safe for them, yet eating them ourselves, and making much of them too, as if they were the greatest treat?

Christians, I believe, will find they have much to give up yet, before the cause of Christ will prosper as they wish it in our native land. Never will the young servant cease to walk the streets with pride and satisfaction in the exhibition of her newly-purchased and fashionable attire, so long as she sees the young ladies, in the family she serves, make it their greatest object to be fashionably dressed. They may say, and with some justice, that she has no right to regulate her conduct by their rule; they may reason with, and even reprove her too; but neither reasoning nor reproof will have the power to correct, so long as example weighs down the opposite scale. The vanity, the weakness of woman is the same in the kitchen as in the drawing-room; and if fashion is omnipotent in one, we cannot expect it to be powerless in the other.

The question then has come to this: shall we continue to compete with our servants in dress, now that excess has become an evil; or shall we endeavor, for their sakes as well as our own, to compete with them in self-denial, and in courage to do right? How can we pause—how can we hesitate in such a choice? Our decision once made on this important point, we shall soon find that fashion has been with us, as well as with them, a hard mistress. Yes, fashion has often demanded of us the only sum of money we had

been able to lay by for the needy poor; while with them it has wrung the father's scanty pittance from his hand, to supply the daughter with the trappings of her own disgrace. Fashion with us has often set on fire the flame of envy, and embittered the shafts of ridicule; while with them it has been a fruitful source of deceit, dishonesty, and crime. Fashion with us has often broken old connections, made us ashamed of valuable friends, and proud of those whose friendship was our bane; while with them it has been the means of introducing the young and the unwary to the companionship of the treacherous and the depraved.

I have said that fashion is a hard mistress: when we contemplate some scenes exhibited, not to the eye of the stranger, but within the circle of private families in this prosperous and enlightened country, we are often led to doubt, whether its boasted happiness is really so universal as patriot poets and patriot orators would teach us to believe. There is a state of things existing behind the scenes in many English homes, an under-current beneath the fair surface of domestic peace, to which belong some of the most pressing anxieties, the darkest forebodings, and the bitterest reflections of which the human mind is capable, and all arising out of the great national evil of competing with our neighbors in the luxuries and elegances of life, so as to be living constantly up to the extent of our pecuniary means, and too frequently beyond them.

It is not likely that young women should understand this evil in its full extent, or be aware of the many sad consequences resulting from it, but they do understand that it is not necessity, nor comfort, nor yet respectability, which makes them press upon their parents the often-repeated demand for money, where there is none to spare. No; it is fashion, the tyrant-mistress upon whose service they have entered, who calls upon them to be dressed in the appointed livery of all her slaves; and thus they wring a father's heart with sorrow, perhaps deprive him of the necessary comforts of old age; or they

send away unpaid a poor and honest tradesman, because they cannot, "absolutely cannot," appear in company with an unfashionable dress.

Now, does it never occur to the amiable, and the affectionate, that a particular color or form of dress is hardly worth a parent's heartache? I know it does; and they feel sorry sometimes to be thus the cause of what they would persuade themselves was unnecessary pain. But fashion is a cruel, as well as a hard mistress; and she tells them that, despite the remonstrances of parental love, despite the legal claims of those whose need is greater than their own, despite the stain upon their father's house and name, if found unable to discharge his lawful debts, her rule is absolute, and she must be obeyed. Yes, I know it does come home to the hearts of the feeling and the kind, to make these frequent and these urgent applications, where they know that the pecuniary means of the family are small; and sometimes they do try to go forth into company again, with a dress not cut according to the newest mode. But fashion is revengeful, as she is cruel; and she turns upon them with the ridicule of gayer friends, and asks whether the garb they wear was the costume of the ark; and, instantly, all that is noble, and generous, and disinterested in their nature, sinks, and they become subject, perhaps, to as much real suffering for the time, as if they had destroyed a mother's peace, or involved a father in pecuniary difficulty.

But let them not be discouraged at thus being deprived for an instant of moral dignity, and moral power. The better feelings of their nature will rally, the vitality of higher principles will revive, if they will but make a stand against the enemy; or, rather, if they will but reflect, that fashion, under whose tyranny they are quailing, is, in reality, an enemy, and not a friend. She is an enemy, because she has incited them to much evil, and to no good. She is an enemy, because when they sink into poverty or distress, led on by her instigation, she immediately forsakes, and leaves them to their fate. Fashion

never yet was on the side of suffering, of sorrow, or of want. Her favorite subjects are the successful, the arrogant, the vain-glorious; the objects of her contempt are the humble, the afflicted, and the poor.

Let the young, then, bear about with them the remembrance of this fact, that there are strong influences which obtain even in good society, but which are not really to be weighed in the balance against the minutest fraction of Christian duty; and that fashion, although approved, and even courted by all classes and denominations of mankind, and present, by general invitation, at all places of public resort, even on occasions the most sacred and solemn, so far from having part or lot in any thing pertaining to religion, can only display the symbols of her triumph in the house of prayer, as a badge of human weakness, and a proof that our follies and infirmities are with us even there.

Beyond the love of fashion, which is common to all classes of society, there sometimes exists in the female breast a passion of a deeper and still more dangerous nature, which society has a powerful tendency to call forth; I mean the love of distinction. In man, this passion is ambition. In woman, it is a selfish desire to stand apart from the many; to be something of, and by, herself; to enjoy what she does enjoy, and to appropriate the tribute which society offers her, distinct from the sisterhood to which she belongs. Of such women it may truly be said, "they have their reward."

The first and most frequent aim to which this passion directs itself, is to be the idol of society; which is synonymous with being the butt of ridicule, and the mock of envy, to all who witness her pretensions, especially to all who have failed in the same career. No sooner does a woman begin to feel herself the idol of society, than she finds around her daily path innumerable temptations, of which she had never dreamed before. Her exalted position is maintained, not by the universal suffrage of her friends, for at least one half of them would pluck her down if they were able; but by the indefatigable exercise of her

ity in the way of evading, stooping, stinging, and sometimes deceiving; and by a continued series of efforts to be all when depressed, witty when absolute, lull, and animated, brilliant, and amiable when disappointed, weary, or distressed. When we think that all this must be gone on, evening after evening, in the same way, as well as among strangers, and that excitement as well as with, in order to merit the title of the occupant of that wished place from being disputed, we are led to exclaim, that the miner, the condemned slave have an easier and a happier lot than hers. Nor is this all. The singularity on which she stands, renders her faults and failures so much the more conspicuous; while it enables every stander-by to question the validity of her pretensions, and triumph over every flaw.

What a situation for a woman!—for a woman who is affectionate, trusting, and simple-hearted! No, never yet was simplicity of heart allied to ambition. And the woman who aspires to be the idol of society, is never satisfied to give up this fair hand-maid from her train—this pearl from her wreath. When a woman's simplicity of heart is gone, she is no longer safe as a friend, faithful as a sister, or tender and true as a wife. But as it is! nature revolts from the thought, that such weakness should be cradled in the arms of a woman whose simplicity is gone.

Her form which the love of distinction assumes, is that of singularity. I have already said much on the subject of good taste, to show that it holds an important position among the excellences of woman, so important, as almost to supply the want of talent, where that quality is deficient. Good taste, however, can more effectually prove the presence of good taste in women, than to make them singular by design. Many are so constituted as to be unavoidably singular; but this is only reconciled by their friends on the ground that they would lose much in singularity and strength of character, by studying to be more like the generality of women.

One of the most wholesome and effectual checks upon this juvenile and ill-judged desire to be singular, might be derived from the fact, that singularity in woman invariably excites remarks, that such remarks almost as invariably degenerate into scandal, and that scandal always destroys good influence. However innocent a woman may be, how much soever she may desire to be useful to others, the fact of her being the subject of scandal effectually destroys her power; for no one likes to be dictated to by a person of whom strange things are spoken; and the agent of Christian benevolence is always less efficient, for being generally considered odd. Still, if the world would pause here, all might be well. But our oddities, while they provoke the laughter of the gay, seem unaccountably to have the effect of awakening the anger of the grave; so that we not unfrequently find persons more severely reflected upon for comparatively innocent peculiarities, than for acts of real culpability.

A repetition of such reflections and injurious remarks passing through society, upon the principle of a snow-ball over a drifted plain, obtains in time a sort of bad name, or questionable character, for the individual against whom they are directed, which no explanation can do any thing to clear away; because founded on facts of so singular a nature, that few people understand how, in the common course of things, they could have happened, and consequently few have charity enough to believe they could originate in any thing but evil. It is thus that the character of woman so often suffers unjustly from her oddities. Strangers cannot understand why we acted as we did, enemies suggest a bad motive as the most probable, gossips take up the scandal, and friends in their turn believe it true; while we, surprised and indignant that so innocent a mode of action should bear so injurious a construction, are unable to defend it, simply because it was out of the ordinary pale of human conduct, though prompted by the same motives which influence the rest of mankind.

It may justly be said of the world, that in

one sense it is a cruel censor of woman ; but in another it is kind. It is, as I have just described, unjustly severe upon individual singularity ; but by its harsh and ready censures, how many does it deter from entering upon the same course of folly, so sure to end in wounded feeling, if not in loss of influence and respectability !

Let it then be kept in mind, that woman, if she would preserve her peace, her safe footing in society, her influence, and her unblemished purity, must avoid remark as an individual, at least in public. The piquant amusements of home, consist much in the display of originality of character, and there it is safe. There her feelings are understood, her motives are trusted to, because they have been long known, and there the brooding wing of parental love is ever ready to shroud her peculiarities from too dangerous an exposure. In the world it is not so. Society is very false to us in this respect. For the sake of an evening's entertainment, singularity is encouraged and drawn out. The mistress of the house, who wishes only to see her party amused, feels no scruple in placing this temptation before unguarded youth. But let not the ready laugh, the gay response, the flattering attention for a moment deceive you as to the real state of the case. It is "seeming all," and those who have been the most amused by your singularities, will not be the last to make them the subject of bitter and injurious remark.

If these observations upon society should appear to any, cynical or severe, or calculated to depress the natural ardor of youth, rather than direct it into safer and more wholesome channels ; it must be remembered, that my design throughout this work, is to speak of the world as it is, not merely as it ought to be ; and though I know there are circles of society, where aims, and motives, and laws of union exist, of a far higher order than to admit of the falsehood or the littleness to which I have alluded ; yet such, it must be acknowledged, is the general tone of ordinary visiting or mixing in company, that the follies of unguarded youth meet with little

candor, and still less kind correction, even among those who are associated with us as friends. I know that the voice of experience is an unwelcome one, when thus lifted up against that of the world, which speaks so smoothly in its first intercourse with the young and inexperienced ; and far more delightful would it be, to send forth the joyous spirit into social life with all its native energies unchecked. There is one grateful and welcome thought, however, which reconciles the task I have imposed upon myself. It is, that none of these energies need therefore be destroyed, or deprived of natural and invigorating exercise. There are home-societies, and little chosen circles of tried and trusted friends ; meetings, perhaps, but rarely occurring, or only accidental, among those who speak with different voices the warm familiar language of one heart ; and here it is that the genuine feelings of unsophisticated nature may safely be poured forth ; here it is that youth may live, and breathe, and be itself, alike without affectation, and without reserve ; here it is, that the spirit of joy may bound and revel unrestrained, because all around it is the atmosphere of love, and the clear bright radiance of the sunshine of truth.

There is yet another flight of female ambition, another course which the love of distinction is apt to take, more productive of folly, and of disappointment, perhaps, than all the rest. It is the ambition of the female author who writes for fame. Could those young aspirants know how little real dignity there is connected with the *trade* of authorship, their harps would be exchanged for distaffs, their rose-tinted paper would be converted into ashes, and their Parnassus would dwindle to a molehill.

Still there is something which the young heart feels in being shut out from intellectual sympathies at home—something in burning and throbbing with unexpressed sensations, until their very weight and intensity become a burden not to be endured ; something in the strong impulse of a social temperament, which longs to pour forth its testimony to the force of nature and of truth ; something in

those mysterious, but deep convictions, which belong to every child of earth, that somewhere on this peopled globe, beneath the glow of sunnier skies ; or on the frozen plain, the desert, or the ocean ; amidst the bowers of beauty, or the halls of pride ; within the hermit's cave, the woodman's cot, or wandering with the flocks upon the distant hills ; there is—there must be, some human or spiritual intelligence, whose imaginations, powers, and feelings, operate in concert with our own. And thus we feel, and thus we write in youth, without any higher motive, because within our homes, tracing our daily walks, or mixing with the circle called society, we find no chord of sympathy which answers to the natural music of our secret souls.

All this, however, is but juvenile romance. The same want of sympathy which so often inspires the first effort of female authorship, might often find a sweet and abundant interchange of kindness in many a faithful heart beside the homely hearth. And after all, there is more true poetry in the fireside affections of early life, than in all those sympathetic associations with unknown and untried developments of mind, which ever have existed either among the sons or the daughters of men.

Taking a more sober view of the case, there are, unquestionably, subjects of deep interest with which women have opportunities peculiar to themselves of becoming acquainted, and thus of benefiting their fellow-creatures through the medium of their writings. But, after all, literature is not the natural channel for a woman's feelings ; and pity, not envy, ought to be the meed of her who writes for the public. How much of what with other women is reserved for the select and chosen intercourse of affection, with her must be laid bare to the coarse cavillings, and coarser commendations, of amateur or professional critics ! How much of what no woman loves to say, except to the listening ear of domestic affection, by her must be told—nay, blazoned to the world ! And then, in her seasons of depression, or of wounded feeling, when her

spirit yearns to sit in solitude, or even in darkness, so that it may be still ; to know and feel that the very essence of that spirit, now embodied in a palpable form, has become an article of sale and bargain, tossed over from the hands of one workman to another, free alike to the touch of the prince and the peasant, and no longer to be reclaimed at will by the original possessor, let the world receive it as it may !

Is such, I ask, an enviable distinction ? I will offer no remarks of my own upon the unsatisfactory nature of literary fame. No man, or woman either, could write for the public, and not feel thankful for public approbation ; thankful for having chosen a subject generally interesting to mankind, and thankful that their own sentiments had met with sympathy from those for whose sake they had been expressed. But, on this subject, I will quote the eloquent language of one,* who better knew what contradictory elements exist in a young, an ardent, and an affectionate heart, combined with an aspiring and commanding intellect.

“What is fame to woman, but a dazzling degradation. She is exposed to the pitiless gaze of admiration ; but little respect, and no love, blends with it. However much as an individual she may have gained in name, in rank, in fortune, she has suffered as a woman. In the history of letters, she may be associated with men, but her own sweet life is lost ; and though, in reality, she may flow through the ocean of the world, maintaining an unsullied current, she is nevertheless apparently absorbed, and become one with the elements of tumult and distraction. She is a reed shaken with the wind ; a splendid exotic, nurtured for display ; an ornament only to be worn on birth-nights and festivities ; the aloe, whose blossom is deemed fabulous, because few can be said to behold it ; she is the Hebrew whose songs are demanded in a ‘strange land ;’ Ruth, standing amid the ‘alien corn ;’ a flower, plunged beneath a petrifying spring ; her affections are the dew that society ex-

* Miss Jewsbury.

hales, but gives not back to her in rain ; she is a jewelled captive, bright, and desolate, and sad !”

CHAPTER VIII.

GRATITUDE AND AFFECTION.

As one who has been conducting an inexperienced traveller through an enemy's country, joyfully enters with him upon the territory of a well-known and familiar friend ; so the writer, whose stern duty it has been to disclose the dangers and deceitfulness of the world to the unpractised eye of youth, delights to open to it that page of human life, which develops all that is most congenial to unsophisticated nature. And can any thing be more so to woman, than gratitude and affection ? How much of her experience—of the deepest well-springs of her feeling—of those joys peculiar to herself, and with which no stranger can intermeddle—are embodied in these two words !

If our sense of obligation in general bears any proportion to our need of kindness, then has woman, above all created beings, the greatest cause for gratitude. The spirit of man, even in early life, bears a widely different impress from that of woman. The high-spirited and reckless boy flings from him half the little grievances which hang about the girl, and check her infant playfulness, sending her home to tell her tale of sorrow, or to weep away her griefs upon her mother's bosom. There is scarcely a more affecting sight presented by the varied scenes of human life, than a motherless or neglected little girl ; yet so strong is the feeling her situation inspires, that happily few are thus circumstanced, without some one being found to care for and protect them. It is true, the lot of woman has trials enough peculiar to itself and the look of premature sedateness and anxiety, which sometimes hangs upon the brow of the little girl, might seem to be the shadowing forth of some vague apprehensions

as to the nature of her future destiny. These trials, however, seldom arise out of unkindness or neglect in her childhood. The voice of humanity would be raised against such treatment ; for what living creature is so helpless and inoffensive as a little girl ? The voice of humanity, therefore, almost universally speaks kindly to her in early life. The father folds her tenderly in his arms, toils for her subsistence and comfort, and watches over her expanding beauty, that he may shield it from all blight. The mother's heart yearns fondly as she, too, watches with more intense anxiety, lest a shadow should fall, or a rude wind should blow, upon her opening flower. Thus, while the sons in a family may perhaps call forth more of the pride and the ambition of their parents, the daughters claim almost all the tenderness, and more than an equal portion of watchfulness and care.

And can the object of so much solicitude be otherwise than grateful ? Oh, no. It may be more consonant with the nature and with the avocations of man, that he should go forth into the world forgetful of these things ; but woman, in the quiet brooding of her secret thoughts—can she forget, how, in the days of helpless infancy, she was accustomed to escape from the rude gaze, or harsh rebuke, to find a never-failing refuge on her father's knee ; how every wish and want was whispered to her mother's ear, which never turned away ; how all things appropriated to her use, were studiously made so safe, so easy, so suited to her taste—her couch of rest, her favorite meal, her fairy-world of toys—all these arranged according to her fancy, or her good ; until, all helpless, and feeble, and dependant as she was, no fear could break the charm of her security, nor sorrow, save what originated in her own bosom, could cast a shadow over the fireside pleasures of her sunny home ?

“No ; woman is not—cannot be ungrateful,” exclaim a thousand sweet voices at once ! Gratitude forms a part of her nature, and without it she would be unworthy of a name among her sex ! I freely grant that gratitude is a part of her nature, because

be no generous or noble character, gratitude is wanting. But I am not that it is always directed to proper

; women are almost always grateful notice of ladies of distinction; they are grateful for being taken out in carriages, they have none at home; they are for presents of ornaments, or articles of valuable clothing which they cannot afford; they are grateful for being invited to pleasant parties: and, indeed, for any they not be said to be grateful—truly grateful? but especially so, for acts of kindness from strangers, or from persons occupying a higher station than themselves. It is a familiar saying, that charity begins at home; and if by home is meant the immediately surrounding ourselves, gratitude ought also most especially to be directed to home, and for this simple reason—strangers may know, or imagine us to have merits; but with our demerits, or perhaps ought rather to say, with that part of our character which comes under the head of irredeemableness, they must necessarily be disappointed, because no one chooses to be indebted to strangers. Against them, too, we are never offended, either by word or deed, that they can have nothing to forgive. We are not so at home. All our evil temper and dispositions have been exhibited there, consequently the kindness received at home is the more generous. There is no one out of the family circle against whom we are not, at one time or another, offended—consequently we owe them a double debt of gratitude, for having kindly overlooked the past, and for receiving us as cordially their favor as if we had never cost them an uneasy thought. It is nothing, in our position, to win the good-will of strangers. We are often thought of how soon that good-will may be withdrawn, did they know us better, or be more conscientious of itself to pain a generous mind. It is so much to continue daily and hourly to receive the kind attentions, the forbearance and love of those who know our meanest faults, who see us as we really are, who have

borne with us in all our different moods for months and years, whom our unkindness could not estrange, whom our indifference could not alienate, whom our unworthiness could not repel—it is, indeed, much to be still followed by their affection, to be protected by their anxious care, and to be supported by their unremitting industry and toil. Yes, and there may come a day when the young in their turn will feel

“How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!”

when they will see the smile of gratitude which ought to be their own, worn only for strangers, they will think then of the days of uncomplaining labor—the nights of untiring watchfulness—the ages of thought and feeling they have lived through, and would willingly experience again—the suffering and the shame they would endure, if that were necessary, for the sake of the beloved of their souls; and they will wonder—for to blame, they will scarce know how—why nature should have left the heart of their child so void, that for all they have so lavishly bestowed they should receive nothing in return.

If gratitude were looked upon more than it is, as a distinct duty—a debt to be discharged without involving any other payment, I am inclined to think its claims would be more frequently attended to, than they now are. But few young persons are in the habit of sufficiently separating gratitude from admiration, and thus they hold themselves above being grateful in due proportion to the aged, the unenlightened, or the insignificant; because they do not often feel disposed to offer to such persons the tribute of their praise. Perhaps they are a little ashamed to have owed any thing to so inferior a source; while, on the other hand, they are but too proud to acknowledge that they are deeply indebted to those whom they admire.

Now, it is against such encroachments of vanity and selfishness, that the amiable and the high-principled are perpetually on their guard. That gratitude will not grow up with us without culture, is sufficiently evident from

the indifference with which all young children treat the donors of their little gifts; receiving them rather as their right, than as a favor. It is, therefore, an excellent habit for young people, to bear perpetually in mind a sort of memorial, or catalogue, of the names of those by whom every article of their own personal property was given, so that even the most insignificant individual to whom they have been thus indebted, may not be forgotten.

"I am naturally," says a celebrated German writer, "as little inclined to gratitude as any one; and it would even be easy for the lively sense of a present dissatisfaction to lead me first to forget a benefit, and next to ingratitude. In order to avoid falling into this error, I early accustomed myself to take pleasure in reckoning up all I possessed, and ascertaining by whose means I acquired it. I think on the persons to whom I am indebted for the different articles in my collections; I reflect on the circumstances, chances, and most remote causes, owing to which I have obtained the various things I prize, in order to pay my tribute of gratitude to whomsoever it is owing. All that surrounds me is thus animated in my sight, and becomes connected with affectionate remembrances. It is with still greater pleasure that I dwell on the objects, the possession of which does not fall within the dominion of the senses; such as the sentiments I have imbibed, and the instruction I have received. Thus my present existence is exalted and enriched by the memory of the past; my imagination recalls to my heart the authors of the good I enjoy; a sweet reminiscence attends the recollection, and I am rendered incapable of ingratitude."

How beautiful is the simplicity of this confession, from one whose mind was capacious beyond the ordinary extent of man's understanding, and to whose genius the literary and the distinguished of all nations were proud to offer the tribute of their praise! How completely does this passage prove to us, that he who knew so many of the secrets of human nature, knew also that it is not possible to begin too humbly with the exercise of gratitude! The nurse who bore the

burden of our childhood, the old servant fallen into poverty and want, the neighboring cottager who used to let us share her orchard's scanty produce, the poor relations who took us to their lowly home when rich ones were less kind, the maiden aunt who patiently instructed us in all her curious arts, the bachelor uncle who kindly permitted us to derange the order of his house—above all, the venerable grandfather, and his aged helpmate, who used to tell us of the good old ways, and warn us against breaking down the ancient landmarks—all these are pleasant household memories, which ought to cling about the heart until they grow into our very being, and become identified with the elements of thought, and feeling, which constitute our life. There is in fact a species of cruelty, as well as injustice, in disentangling the memory from these early associations. To have received our very nature, our principles, the bias of our sentiments, all that which is understood by distinctiveness of character, from the hands of these old friends, and not to look back and acknowledge it with thankfulness, though the casual notice of a passing stranger furnishes food for gratitude—the fact is scarcely to be thought of, still less believed; and we look to the daughters of England to show us that they know better how to bestow their gratitude.

When the nature of gratitude is considered in its proper light, as a debt which we have contracted, and which consequently must be discharged, we see at once that the merit or demerit of the individual to whom we owe this debt, has nothing whatever to do with our payment of it. A generous mind would perhaps feel more bound to discharge it to an unworthy object, simply because where respect or love was wanting, grateful feeling would be all that could with propriety be offered. But, as in all such cases, the debt, though just, must still be painful and humiliating, it is of the utmost importance, both to young and old, that they should be careful never to be the willing recipients of obligations from persons whom they neither love nor esteem. The young need great watch-

fulness in this respect, and sometimes, from their over-willingness to incur obligations, involve themselves in connections and associations highly disadvantageous.

It is an excellent plan for young women, always to put this question to themselves before they accept an offered kindness. "Is the person who offers it, one whom I should like to feel indebted to ? or am I prepared to make all the return of gratitude to that person, which would, under similar circumstances, be due to the most praiseworthy and distinguished individual of my acquaintance ?" If the answer be in the negative, nothing but a meanness of spirit, of which I cannot believe the daughters of England to be capable, could lead to the acceptance of such an obligation.

In this, therefore, as well as in all other cases, it is of the utmost importance that gratitude should be considered as a distinct feeling, in no way involving any other. It sometimes happens, however, and especially during the present rapid march of intellect, that the junior members of a family are far in advance of their parents in the cultivation of their intellectual powers, and this difference occasionally leads to a want of respect towards the heads of the family, which is alike distressing and disgraceful. On the other hand, there are young women, (and happy would it be for our nation, if all the daughters of England were such,) who, remembering that their parents, however humble and unenlightened, are their parents still ; that by their self-denial and their toil, and as the highest proof of their regard, they have received the education which makes them so much to differ—make it their constant study to offer to them tokens of respect and regard of such a nature as not to draw forth their intellectual deficiencies, but to place them on the higher ground of moral excellence. How beautiful, how touching is the solicitude of such young persons, to guard the venerated brow from shame ; and to sacrifice even something of the display of their own endowments, rather than outshine those who, with all their deficiencies, still were the ora-

cles of their infant years, and who unquestionably did more during the season of childhood, towards the formation of their real character, than has since been done by the merely intellectual discipline of schools. Yes, we may owe our grammar, our geography, our music, and our painting, to what are called the instructors of our youth ; but the seeds of moral character are sown by those who surround us in infancy ; and how much soever we may despise the hand by which that seed is scattered, the bias of our moral being is derived from that agent more than from any other.

How just, then, and how true, is that development of youthful gratitude which looks back to these early days, and seeks to return into the bosom of parental love, the treasures of that harvest which parental love has sown !

And it is meet that youth should do this—youth, whose very nature it is to be redundant with the rills of life, and fruitful in joy, and redolent in bloom, from the perpetual flowing forth of its own glad waters—youth, which is so rich in all that gladdens and exhilarates ; how can it be penurious and niggardly in giving out ? No, nature has been so munificent to youth, it cannot yet have learned the art of grudging ; and gratitude, the most liberal, the most blessed of all human feelings, was first required of us as a debt, that we might go on paying according to our measure, through all the different stages of existence ; and though we may never have had money or rich gifts, the poorest among us has been able to pay in kindness, and sometimes in love.

In the cultivation and exercise of the benevolent feelings of our nature, there is this beautiful feature to be observed in the order of divine providence—that expenditure never exhausts. Thus the indulgence of gratitude, and the bestowment of affection, instead of impoverishing, render more rich the fountain whence both are derived ; while, on the other hand, the habit of withholding our generous affections, produces the certain effect of checking their growth, and diminishing the spontaneous effusion of kindness.

The habit of encouraging feelings of gratitude towards our fellow-creatures, of recalling their friendly and benevolent offices towards ourselves, of thinking what would have been our situation without them, and, in short, of reckoning up the items of the great debt we all have incurred, especially in infancy and youth, has a most beneficial effect upon the mind, in the bias it gives towards the feeling and expression of gratitude in general, not only as confined to the intercourse of social life, or the interchange of kindness among our fellow-creatures, but with regard to the higher obligations of gratitude, which every child of sin and sorrow must feel, on being admitted to participation in the promises of the gospel, and the glorious hopes which the gospel was sent to inspire.

I have said, that women, above all created beings, have cause for gratitude. Deprived of the benefits of the Christian dispensation, woman has ever been, and will be ever the most abject, and the most degraded of creatures, oppressed in proportion to her weakness, and miserable in proportion to her capability of suffering. Yet, under the Christian dispensation, she who was the first in sin, is raised to an equality with man, and made his fellow-heir in the blessings of eternal life. Nor is this all. A dispensation which had permitted her merely to creep, and grovel through this life, so as to purchase by her patient sufferings a title to the next, would have been unworthy of that law of love by which pardon was offered to a guilty world. In accordance with the ineffable benevolence of this law, woman was therefore raised to a moral, as well as a spiritual equality with man; and from being first his tempter, and then his slave, she has become his helpmate, his counsellor, his friend, the object of his most affectionate solicitude, the sharer of his dignity, and the partaker in his highest enjoyments.

When we compare the situation of woman, too, in our privileged land, with what it is even now in countries where the Christian religion less universally prevails, we cannot

help exclaiming, that of all women upon earth, those who live under the salutary influence of British laws and British institutions, have the deepest cause for gratitude. And can the daughters of Britain be regardless of these considerations? Will they not rather study how to pay back to their country, in the cultivation and exercise of their best feelings, the innumerable advantages they are thus deriving. And what is the sacrifice? Oh, blessed dispensation of love!—that we are never so happy as when feeling grateful, and never so well employed, as when acting upon this feeling!

While, then, they begin first by retracing all the little rills of kindness by which their cup of benefit has been filled, let them not pause in thought, until they have counted up every item of that vast catalogue of blessings which extend from human instrumentality, to divine; nor let them pause in action, until they have rendered every return which it is possible for a finite being, aided by watchfulness and prayer, to make.

What a subject for contemplation does this view of gratitude afford, to those who say they find nothing to interest them in human life! What a field of exercise for those who complain that they find nothing to do!

Affection, too, is a subject in which the interests of woman are deeply involved, because affection in a peculiar manner constitutes her wealth. Beyond the sphere of her affections, she has nothing, and is nothing. Let her talents be what they may, without affection they can only be compared to a splendid casket, where the gem is wanting. Affection, like gratitude, must begin at home. Let no man choose for the wife of his bosom, a woman whose affections are not warm, and cordial, and ever flowing forth at her own fireside. Yet there are young women whose behavior in society, and among those whom they call their friends, exhibits every sign of genuine affection, who are yet cold, indifferent, and inconsiderate to their brothers, sisters, and parents. These are the women against whom men ought to be especially warned, for sure I am, that such affection

ought never to be trusted to, as that which is only called into life by the sunshine of society, or the excitement of transient intercourse with comparative strangers.

Affection also resembles gratitude in this, that the more we bestow, the more we feel, provided only it is bestowed upon safe and suitable objects. It is the lavish and reckless expenditure of this treasure in early life, and simply under the direction of fancy, without regard to natural claims, which so often leaves the heart of its possessor poor, and cold, and joyless.

Here, then, the claims of nature and of home may always be attended to with safety. No young girl can be too affectionate at home, because the demerits of a brother, a sister, or a parent, except in some rare and peculiar instances, constitute no disqualification for being the recipients either of her gratitude or her affection. But her approval and her admiration must still be kept distinct, lest her affection for an unworthy relative should render her insensible to the exact line of demarcation between moral good and evil. Were it not thus wisely and mercifully permitted us to continue to love our nearest connections, even when not deserving of general esteem, where would the prodigal, or the outcast, be able to find a shelter, when the horrors of a wounded conscience might drive them back from the ways of guilt? The mother's heart is subject to a higher, holier law than that which separates her erring child from the fellowship of mankind; the father meets his returning son while yet afar off; and the sister—can she withhold her welcome?—can she neglect the study of all those little arts of love, by which a father's home may be rendered as alluring as the world?

While the young of both sexes are suffering from the consequences of a system of education, under which the cultivation of moral principle bears no proportion to the cultivation of the intellectual powers, it is desirable to offer all the assistance we can in the improvement of that portion of human character which is at once the most important and the most neglected. In order to strengthen

the good resolutions of those who are really desirous of paying the attention and the respect to old age which is justly its due, I would suggest to the accomplished young reader, an idea which it is highly probable may never before have crossed her mind, but which I feel assured will stain her cheek with shame, if she has ever allowed herself to treat her parents, or even her grand-parents with contempt, as inferior in the scale of consideration to herself, because of their want of mental cultivation.

Let her remember, then, whatever their deficiency in other points of wisdom may be, that there is one in which they must be her superiors. She may occasionally be obliged to correct their grammatical inaccuracies; she may be able not only to dazzle them with her accomplishments, but even to baffle them in argument; yet there is one fundamental part of true knowledge, in consideration of which, every youthful head must bow to age. Not ten thousand times the sum of money expended on your education would be sufficient to purchase this treasure of human wisdom for you. And there sits the aged woman, with her white locks, and her feeble hands, a by-word, and perhaps a jest, from the very helplessness of worn-out nature; yet, all the while, this humble and neglected being may be rich in the wealth which princes are too poor to buy; for she is rich in experience, and that is where you are poor. The simple being you despise has lived to see the working out of many systems, the end of many beginnings, the detection of much falsehood, the development of much truth; in short, the operation of principles upon the lives and conduct of men; and here, in this most important point of wisdom, you are—you must be her inferior.

The wisdom of experience, independently of every other consideration, presents a strong claim upon the respectful attention of youth, in cases where propriety of conduct is a disputed point between parent and child. Young persons sometimes think their parents too severe in the instructions they would enforce; but let it ever be remembered, that those pa-

rents have experience to direct them ; and that, while the child is influenced only by inclination, or opinion, founded upon what must at least be a very limited and superficial knowledge of things in general, the opinion of the parent is founded upon facts, which have occurred during a far longer acquaintance with human nature, and with what is called the world.

Let the experience of the aged, then, be weighed against your modern acquirements, and even without the exercise of natural affection, we find that they are richly entitled to your respectful attention. But there is something beyond this consideration in the overflowing of the warm and buoyant feelings of youth, which so naturally and so beautifully supply the requirements of old age, that scarcely can we picture to ourselves a situation more congenial to the daughters of England, than one of those fireside scenes, where venerated age is treated with the gratitude and affection which ought ever to be considered as its due.

It sometimes happens that the cares and the anxieties of parental love have a second time to be endured by those who have had to mourn the loss of their immediate offspring. Perhaps a family of orphan sons and daughters have become their charge, at a time of life when they had but little strength of body, or buoyancy of spirit, to encounter the turbulence of childhood, and the waywardness of youth. How admirably, then, are the character and the constitution of woman adapted to the part which it becomes her duty and her privilege to act. Even the kindest among boys would scarcely know how to accommodate himself to the peculiarities of old age. But woman has an intuitive perception of these things ; and the little playful girl can be gentle and still, the moment she sees that her restlessness or loud mirth would offend.

And what woman, I would ask, was ever less estimable for this early exercise of self-discipline ? None can begin too soon. The labor of love is never difficult, except to those who have put off compliance with this sacred duty until too late in life ; or who, while the

affections of the heart were young and have centred them in self, and lived for alone. The social scenes upon which nation loves to dwell, are those where has never found a place among the household gods. They are those where the daughters of a family, from the oldest to the infant, are all too happy in the exercise of their affections, to think of self. Their relative existence, and their enjoyment consist more in giving than receiving. Affections thus cherished in the cordial intercourse of home, may early be sent forth on errands of kindness to all who are fortunate enough to come within the sphere of their affections ; and happy is the man who comes from such a family the companion of an earthly lot !

CHAPTER IX.

FRIENDSHIP AND FLIRTATION.

How much of what is most loved and most valuable to us in the course of earthly experience, arises out of the imperfections and the feebleness of our nature. Friendship would never have existed, but for the absolute want of the human heart, its utter inability to perform the functions of life without a participator in its joys, a sharer of its secrets, and a soother of its sorrows.

Youth is the season when we most desire to stand alone. Interests and claims, however pressing on every hand, and hemming us into a narrow and accustomed path, from which is little temptation to deviate. But in youth we seem to walk at large, with no bounds to our horizon ; and the fear and uncertainty which necessarily attend our movements render a companion, with whom we may consult, deliberate, and sympathize, absolutely necessary to our cheerfulness and success.

It is a subject of surprise to many, that young people so seldom enter into close and i

friendship with the members of their own family. Were this more frequently the case, how much more candor and simplicity of heart would mingle with the intercourse of friends! To the members of our own family, we must of necessity appear as we really are. No false or flattering aspect can deceive those whose eyes are constantly upon our conduct; and we are consequently less tempted to put forward our best feelings before them, in the hope of concealing our worst. In such intimacies the nearest friends have the least suspicion of each other's truth. After-circumstances can bring forth no unexpected development of character on either side; nor can there be the wounded feeling, which falsehood, however unpremeditated or unconsciously practised, never fails to produce. Again, there would be the strength of natural ties to mingle with this bond the recollections of childhood, the oft-repeated forgiveness, the gratitude to which allusion has already been made—all these would blend together in a union the most sacred, and the most secure, which perhaps is ever found on earth.

Nor do I scruple to call this union the most secure, because it is the only intimacy in which every thing can with propriety be told. There are private histories belonging to every family, which, though they operate powerfully upon individual happiness, ought never to be named beyond the home-circle; and there are points of difference in character, and mutual misapprehensions, with instances of wounded feeling, and subjects of reproof and correction, which never can be so freely touched upon, even in the most perfect union of conjugal affection. On this subject, however, I have already spoken so fully in another work,* that little room is left for further notice here: I will, therefore, only allude to some of the causes which I believe most frequently operate against young persons choosing their confidants at home, and especially for the communication of their religious feelings or impressions.

* The Women of England.

It is a melancholy thought, that the want of consistency in the private and domestic habits of religious professors, may possibly be the means of inducing young persons to seek their spiritual advisers among those with whom they are less intimately acquainted, and of whom they have consequently formed a higher estimate; while, on the other hand, a diffidence of themselves, perhaps a misgiving, both as to their past and future conduct, renders them unwilling to communicate fully and freely with those who daily watch their steps, lest the suspicion of hypocrisy should fall upon them for having given utterance to sentiments and emotions, so much at variance with the general course of their lives.

That these hindrances to home-confidence should sometimes exist, where the parties are perfectly sincere in their good intentions, I am quite prepared to believe; but there are other cases, and perhaps more frequent ones, in which the sincerity is less perfect, where the dread of being committed to any particular line of conduct consistent with the sentiments or emotions expressed, operates against their being so much as spoken of to any who compose the family circle.

It would be taking a dark view of human nature, indeed, to suppose that those who know us best are less disposed than strangers to attach themselves to us; yet, I would ask the young aspirant to intimacy with a new acquaintance, whether she is entering upon that intimacy with a sincere and candid wish to be to that friend exactly what she is at home? If not, she is, to all intents and purposes, a deceiver. And there is much deceit in all our early friendships, though I am far from supposing it to be all intentional. Indeed, I am convinced it is not, because this heart-searching process is what few young persons submit to, before commencing an intimacy.

In friendship, as well as in all other reciprocal engagements, it is highly important to limit our expectations of benefit according to the exact measure of our deserts; and by this means we may avoid many of those bitter disappointments, for which the world is

so unjustly and unsparingly blamed. The world is bad enough; but let us be honest, and take our share of condemnation, for making at least one item of the world such as it is; and by thus acquiring the habit of strict and candid self-examination in early life, we see that we have little right to charge the world with falsehood, when our first engagement, beyond the circle of our own family, has been entered into by a system of deceit.

There is, too, a rashness and impetuosity in the formation of early friendships, which of themselves are sufficient to render such intimacies uncertain, and of short duration. Few characters can be considered as really formed, under the age of twenty-one, or twenty-five; yet friendships sometimes begin at a much earlier date. It is not in nature, then, that the friend we loved at sixteen, should be the same to us at twenty-six; or that the features of our own character should have undergone no change during that period. Yet it must not be called falsehood, or fickleness either, which causes such friendships to fail. It is consistent with the laws of reason, and of nature, that they should do so; for had the same individuals who thus deplore each other's falsehood, met for the first time at the age of twenty-six, they would probably each have been the very last which the other would have chosen as a friend.

Again, there must be an equality in friendship, to render it either lasting or desirable—an equality not only in rank and station, but, as far as may be, in intellectual advantages. However warm may be the attachment of two friends of different rank in society, they must occasionally be involved in dilemmas, from which it is impossible to escape without wounded feeling, either on one side or both. Each of these friends, it must be remembered, will have her relatives and connections, through whom her pride will be perpetually subject to imaginary insult, and her susceptibility to real pain. Those who are inferior in mind are, however, much more objectionable as friends, than those who are inferior only

in worldly circumstances; because they must always be incapable of judging of persons more highly gifted than themselves, and thus they will bestow their praise and their blame with equal injustice. The ignorant, too, are always prejudiced; and, therefore, in the choice of friends whose minds are unenlightened, the young must necessarily incur the risk of imbibing opinions formed upon false conclusions, which in all probability will exercise a powerful influence upon the whole of their subsequent lives.

Young people are too apt to think the only use of talent is to interest in conversation; if, then, they find themselves interested without it, they are satisfied to dispense with this quality in a friend. But how empty—how unprofitable must become that intimacy where mind is not taken into account—how worthless, how unsatisfactory in every case of trial, the society of that friend who cannot advise, as well as pity!

Were it not for equality being requisite to the mutual participation of the pleasures of friendship, I should strongly recommend all young persons to seek a friend among those who are older, and more experienced than themselves. In this case, however, too much must not be expected in return, for it is scarcely possible that the confiding intimacy of a young girl should always be interesting, or even acceptable to a woman more advanced in life; unless, indeed, the kindness of relationship should render the office of the elder confidant a welcome duty.

Regardless of these wholesome rules, it is more than probable that the greater part of my young readers will go on forming intimacies according to circumstances, or individual fancy, and with little reference to future consequences. In time, however, some of these intimacies will become irksome, while others will die away. It will then become a serious question, "Whom shall I endeavor to retain as friends?" Try, then, to ascertain, in this stage of your short experience, whose society has had the happiest effect upon your own character; and let not this great question remain unsettled, until

you have ascertained, with regard to each one of the individuals who have composed your circle of nominal friends, whether they have generally left you better or worse for a day spent in their company—more willing to submit to the requirements of religious duty, or more disposed to consider those requirements unreasonable and severe.

The pleasure or amusement immediately derived from the society of an individual, is a dangerous and deceitful test by which to try the value of their friendship; but the direct influence of their society upon our own state of mind, not while they are with us, but after the charm of their society is withdrawn, is a means of judging, which no rational and responsible being ought to neglect.

If, for instance, in the circle of our favorite associates, there is one who habitually awakens the laughter of merriment, and charms into magic fleetness the hours you pass together; yet if the same individual leaves you flat, and dull, and indisposed for the useful and less pleasing occupations of life; beware of making her your friend. But if there be another who, possibly less amusing at the time you converse together, yet leaves you raised above the common level of experience, by the support of true and lofty principles; disposed to reject what is false or mean, and to lay hold on what is good; lifted out of the slavery of what is worldly or trifling, and made stronger in every generous purpose, and every laudable endeavor; let the friendship of that individual be bound around your heart, and cherished to the end of life, as one of the richest blessings permitted us to enjoy on earth.

By this rule, those who are candidates for our friendship, may safely be tried; but there is yet a closer test, which must be applied to friendship itself. If the friend you have chosen, never attempts to correct your faults, or make you better than you are, she is not worthy of the name; nor ought she to be fully confided in, whatever may be the extent of her kindness to you, or the degree of her admiration of your character.

Having well chosen your friend, the next

thing is, to trust her, and to show that you do so. Mutual trust is the strongest cement of all earthly attachments. We are so conscious of weakness ourselves, that we need this support from others; and no compliment paid to the ear of vanity was ever yet so powerful in its influence, as even the simplest proof of being trusted. The one may excite a momentary thrill of pleasure, the other serves, for many an after day, to nourish the life-springs of a warm and generous heart.

It is needless to say how effectually a suspicious, or a jealous temper, destroys this truth. If we really loved our friends as we ought, and as we probably profess to love them, we should be less watchful of their conduct towards ourselves, than of ours to them; nor should we grudge them the intimacy of other friends, when conducive to their enjoyment, if our own attachment was based upon pure and disinterested affection. Friendship, which is narrowed up between two individuals, and confined to that number alone, is calculated only for the intercourse of married life, and seldom has been maintained with any degree of lasting benefit or satisfaction, even by the most romantic and affectionate of women. True friendship is of a more liberal and expansive nature, and seldom flourishes so well as when extended through a circle. A circle of young female friends, who love and trust each other, who mutually agree to support the weak in their little community, to confirm the irresolute, to reclaim the erring, to soothe the irritable, and to solace the distressed; what a realization does this picture present of the brightest dreams of imagination, when we think what woman might be in this world to her own sex, and to the community at large!

And is this, then, too much to expect from the daughters of England—that woman should be true to woman? In the circle of her private friends, as well as from her own heart, she learns what constitutes the happiness and the misery of woman, what is her weakness and what her need, what her bane and what her blessing. She learns to comprehend the

deep mystery of that electric chain of feeling which ever vibrates through the heart of woman, and which man, with all his philosophy, can never understand. She learns that every touch of that chain is like the thrilling of a nerve; and she thus acquires a power peculiar to herself, of distinguishing exactly between the links which thrill with pleasure, and those which only thrill with pain.

Thus, while her sympathy and her tenderness for a chosen few is strengthened by the bond of friendship into which she has entered, though her confidence is still confined to them, a measure of the same sympathy and tenderness is extended to the whole sisterhood of her sex, until, in reality, she becomes what woman ever must be—in her noblest, purest, holiest character—the friend of woman.

What should we think of a community of slaves, who betrayed each other's interests? of a little band of shipwrecked mariners upon a friendless shore, who were false to each other? of the inhabitants of a defenceless nation, who would not unite together in earnestness and good faith against a common enemy? We are accustomed to hear of the meanness of the powerful, when they forsake the weak; but there is a meanness of a lower grade—when the weak forsake each other.

No party, however, can be weak, which has truth for its element, and love for its bond of union. Women are only weak in their vanity, their selfishness, their falsehood to each other. In their integrity, their faithfulness, their devoted affection, they rise to an almost superhuman eminence; because they are strong in the elements of immaterial being, and powerful in the nature which is capable, when regenerated, of being shared with angels.

From the nature of true friendship, we turn to the consideration of what are its requirements. These, also, are mutual. If we expect to receive, we must be studious to give. An interchange of kind offices and evident proofs of affection are essential to the vitality of friendship; avoiding, however, the slightest approach to any thing like a debtor and creditor account of the number of presents

given or received, or even of the number of letters exchanged.

It seems a strange anomaly in friendship, that young persons, however ardently attached, should so seldom write, except when a letter is considered to be due by a certain length of time having elapsed since the last was received. It often happens, that one friend is particularly engaged, while the other has an abundance of unoccupied time; but a letter is still required by the idle party, or the love which she thinks so glowing and so tender, finds no channel of expression to her friend. Perhaps a friend is ill; and then is the time, above all others, when real love would dictate a succession of kind letters, such as would not tax the afflicted, or the feeble one, with the effort of making any return. There is, in fact, a mystery about the letter-writing of young women, which I have never been able fully to understand. It occupies their time; it used to drain their purses, or the purses of their friends! it calls forth more complaining than almost any thing else they have to do; the letters they receive are seldom fraught with much interest; and yet they plunge into this reciprocity of annoyance, as if the chief business of life was to be writing or receiving letters.

Still, I am very far from supposing that this means of interchanging sentiment and thought, might not be rendered highly beneficial to the youthful mind; because I believe writing is of great importance as a branch of education. Without this habit, few persons, and especially women, think definitely. The accustomed occupation of their minds is that of musing; and they are, consequently, seldom able to disentangle a single clear idea from the current of vague thoughts, which they suffer perpetually to flow, and which affords them a constant, but, at the same time, a profitless amusement, in the variety of ideas it presents, alike without form, and void. But, in order to write with any degree of perspicuity, we are, to a certain extent, compelled to think; and consequently, the habit of writing letters, if the subject-matter be well chosen, might be rendered highly advantage-

ous to young women, who, on the termination of their scholastic exercises, require, more than at any other time of life, some frequently recurring mental occupation, to render their education complete.

The art of writing a really good letter ranks unquestionably among the most valuable accomplishments of woman, and next to that of conversing well. In both cases, the first thing to be avoided, is common-place; because, whatever partakes of the nature of common-place, is not only vulgar, but ineffective.

I know not how I can better define this term, so frequently used, and so little understood, than by saying that common-place consists chiefly in speaking of things by their little qualities, rather than their great ones. Thus it is common-place to speak of religious persons as using cant, to speak of distinguished characters as being well or ill-dressed, and to speak of the works of Shakspeare as being peculiar in their style. It is also common-place to use those expressions of kindness, or sympathy, which custom has led us to expect as a matter of course. And we never feel this more, than in cases of affliction or death; because there is a kind of set phraseology made use of on such occasions, which those who really feel would often be glad to vary, if they only knew how. It is common-place to speak of some fact as recently discovered, to those who have long known it. But above all that is genuine in common-place, the kind of flattery generally adopted by men, when they mean to address themselves pleasantly to women, deserves the credit of pre-eminence. Indeed, so deficient, for the most part, is this flattery, in point, originality, and adaptation, that I have known sensible women, who felt more really flattered by the most humiliating truths, even plainly spoken; because such treatment implied a confidence in their strength of mind and good sense, in being able to bear it.

Common-place letters are such as, but for the direction, would have done as well for any other individual as the one to whom they are addressed. In description especially, it is desirable to avoid common-place. A cor-

respondent making a tour of the Lakes, tells you that on such a day she set off to the summit of Helvellyn. That the first part of the ascent was steep and difficult, the latter more easy; that the view from the summit was magnificent, extending over so many lakes, and so many other mountains; and there ends the story; and well for you, if it does end there. But such writers unfortunately often go on through a whole catalogue of beauties and sublimities, no single one of which they set before you in such a manner as to render it one whit more attractive, or indeed more peculiar in any of its features, than the king's highway.

In the vain hope of avoiding common-place, some young writers have recourse to extravagant expressions when describing little things; a mode of writing, which, besides being the medium of falsehood, leaves them in the uncomfortable predicament of having no language adequate to what is great.

It is difficult to say what is the direct opposite of common-place, without giving lengthened quotations from the best style of epistolary correspondence, with which the literature of our country during the last century abounds. There is a quality both in writing and conversation, to which I can give no other name than *freshness*, which is not only opposite in its nature and effect to common-place, but on which I believe depends more than half the pleasure and amusement we derive from the intercourse of mind with mind. Few persons possess this charm; because few are humble enough to suppose that it would be any advantage to them; and those who do, are always in danger of losing it by writing too much. The letters of a woman of moderate abilities, and limited sphere of observation, may possess this great beauty; while those of a more highly gifted, or accomplished writer, may want it; because it must ever depend upon a capability of receiving vivid impressions, combined with a certain degree of simplicity of heart.

The first consideration in commencing a letter should be, "What is my object in writing it?" If simply for the relief of your own

mind you take up the pen, remember that such a communication can only be justified by pressing and peculiar circumstances, and that it ought only to be addressed to the nearest and dearest of your friends, whose love for you is of such a nature as to pardon so selfish an act.

A higher object in writing, is to give pleasure, or afford benefit, to an absent friend; it is therefore necessary to place yourself in idea in her circumstances, and consider what she would most wish to know. If her affection for you be such, and such I am aware affection often is, that she has no desire beyond that of receiving intelligence concerning yourself, let your descriptions of your state and circumstances be clear and fresh; so that she may see you as you really are, and, as it were, live with you through the enjoyments or the trials of every day. How strong and lively may be the impressions thus conveyed—how deep the interest they excite, provided only the writer will condescend to be sufficiently simple—sufficiently sincere!

It is, however, only under peculiar circumstances, such as change of scene and situation, that young persons can have much of this kind to communicate. What then are they to say? Shall the minute details of family affairs be raked up, to fill their letters? This is at least a dangerous alternative, more especially as it too frequently induces a habit of exaggeration, in order to make what is called "a good story" out of a mere trifle; and thus, that worst kind of falsehood, which is partly true, becomes perpetuated through the medium of pen and paper.

To avoid this danger on the one hand, and the weariness of writing without any thing to say, on the other, would it not be practicable for young women to agree, for their own improvement and that of their friends, to correspond on some given subject, and if unequal to the task of treating it in a style of an essay, they might at least relate to each other some important or amusing facts, which they had met with in the course of their reading, and by relating them in their own language, and then comparing them with

that of the author, they would be learning valuable lessons in the art of composition! for of all kinds of style, that of easy narrative is the most useful.

The study of nature in this department of mental improvement, might be made to afford a never-failing source of interest, both for individual thought and familiar communication. The peculiarities of plants and animals, and even the different traits of human character developed by people of different countries and grades of society, might all contribute to the same object, so as in time to displace from the page of female correspondence, the trifling, the common-place, or the more mischievous gossip, which that page too generally unfolds.

In speaking of a mutual interchange of tokens of affection being essential to the vitality of friendship, I am far from including under this head, those expressions of endearment which are sometimes used by young women, so indiscriminately, as entirely to lose their individual force and value. Indeed, I am not quite sure that terms of endearment made use of as a matter of course, are desirable under any circumstances; because there will be occasions, even with the most warmly attached, when the tones of the voice, and the expression of the countenance, indicate any thing but love; and having heard these tender epithets still made use of on such occasions, it is scarcely possible to retain our value for them when applied with real tenderness and respect. It also frequently happens, where these epithets are commonly used, that the very individual who has just been speaking to us injuriously of another, turns to the injured party with the same expression of endearment so frequently applied to ourselves, and which we consequently become extremely willing to dispense with for the future.

It is the peculiar nature of friendship, that it will not be mocked. All manner of weakness, and a fearful sum of follies and transgressions, it is willing to bear with; but faithfulness is a requisite without which it is impossible it should continue to exist. It is not

necessary, in order to be faithful to our friends, we should be always praising them, nor that we should praise them more than they deserve. So far from this, we do them injury by too much praise, because it attracts occasions of disappointment in those who rate their acquaintance upon the strength of evidence in their favor. Nor is it necessary, when we hear their characters discussed in company, to defend them against charge; at least to deny their having faults which are conspicuous to every eye.

But one thing is necessary on such occasions—that a friend should be ever prompt and anxious to bring forward the virtue which remains on the side of virtue, as it may be done with prudence and secrecy.

The indulgence of caprice is another evil prevalent among the young, with which friendship disdains that her claims should be in competition. Capricious persons are who frequently choose to act under a contrary impulse, in a manner opposed to the general and acknowledged rule of their conduct and feelings. Thus the social companion of yesterday, may choose to be a stranger to-day. She may have no unkindness in her heart towards you, yet it may alter her mood to meet as if you had never before. She may have no desire to give pain, yet her looks may be as forbidding, her manners as repulsive, as if she had loved you. She may be habitually cheerful, yet her humor may be to hang her head, and lower her brow, and hardly give an answer when you speak to her. It is scarcely necessary to say, that few are more ruinous to friendship, and to domestic and social happiness in general, than caprice; because its very nature is to render every one uncertain, and to chill, to offend, or to irritate all with whom it comes in contact; while friendship requires that it should always be the same; and nothing is more painful to the feelings of a friend, than to find that caprice, or the indulgence of our own humor, is a matter of more distance to you than her happiness. Such

wounds, however, are happily not incurable. Friendship, thus repulsed, is soon withdrawn; and the capricious woman has the satisfaction of finding herself left at last to the enjoyment of her different moods alone. There is, in short, something in the very nature of caprice so selfish and ungenerous, so opposed to all the requirements of affection, that in no connection in life, except where the tie is indissoluble, can it long be endured.

But while we are justified in acting upon the repulsion which caprice so naturally excites, there are other trials which, if true, friendship must submit to endure; because they necessarily spring out of the nature of the human heart, and, instead of being checked by the influence of society, they are fostered by it, and subsist upon the very elements of which it is composed. One of these evils is a spurious kind of social intercourse, falsely denominated friendship, which, unfortunately, sometimes links itself with the true. I say falsely, for that friendship is not worthy the name, which is founded upon tale-bearing and detraction. Yet, how much of the intimacy of young women consists in the magnifying and telling of little troubles, particularly of a domestic nature, and most commonly injurious to some member of the household to which they belong.

Let the young be especially warned against this most insidious and most dangerous temptation; and let them be assured, that there are few causes of more bitter repentance in after life, than the reflection that they have thus wantonly made themselves enemies to those of their own house. There is one fact which ought of itself to deter them from the indulgence of this habit. It is, that friendship based on such a foundation is never lasting. No; friendship must have love, not hate, for its element. If the intimacy of youth consists in evil speaking, and injurious thoughts, it soon becomes assimilated with the poisonous aliment on which it feeds. The friend becomes an enemy; and what is the consequence? The shafts of slander are turned against yourself, and the dark secrets you have revealed, go forth to

the world as swift witnesses against you, as well as against those to whom duty and natural affection should have kept you true.

Besides which, there are few cases of human conduct where inexperienced youth can be a correct or sufficient judge. It may appear to you at the time you speak of family grievances, that a parent has been too severe, that a sister has been selfish, or that a brother has been unjust. But you are not even capable of judging of yourself, as regards the impression produced by your own behavior upon others; how then can you pronounce upon the motives of others in their behavior to you? more especially how are you to lift the veil of experience, and penetrate the deep mysteries of parental love? yet, how otherwise are you to understand

"The secrets of the folded heart
That seemed to thee so stern?"

There are hordes of human beings, once partakers with us in the privileges and enjoyments of our native land, now branded with infamy, and toiling in chains upon a distant shore, who have to regret, when too late, some guilty theft committed in early youth upon the property of a confiding and indulgent master. And the voice of our country cries out against them for the injury and ingratitude, as well as for the injustice, of what they have done. And is it possible that within the fair and polished circles of the same favored land, where woman blooms and smiles, and youth is radiant with joy, and happy in the security of domestic peace—is it possible that woman can so far forget her heart-warm affection, her truth, her devotedness of soul, as, while her hands are pure from the contamination of so foul a crime as theft, to permit her tongue to be the instrument of injury more deep than robbery—more bitter than the loss of wealth?

We will not—we cannot believe it; because the time is coming when the daughters of England, admonished of their duties on every hand, will learn to look, not to the mere gratification of an idle moment, in what they say, and what they do, but to the eter-

nal principles of right and wrong; and to the great balance in which human actions are weighed, in reference not only to time, but to eternity.

It is good for many reasons that youth should early acquire a habit of checking its own impulses, and never is this more important than when under temptation to speak injuriously of others. A few years more of experience, a few more instances of personal trial, a little more self-knowledge, and a little more observation of others, will in all probability open your understandings to an entirely altered view of human nature, of the motives which influence the conduct of mankind, as well as of the claims of affection, when combined with those of duty. You will then see how unjust have been your first conclusions, how your thoughts have wronged those whom you were unable to understand; and happy will it be for you when making this discovery, to reflect that you have scrupulously kept your erroneous views and injurious suspicions confined to the knowledge of your own heart.

Friendship, if true, has much to bear from the idle and mischievous gossip of society. Indeed, gossip may justly be considered as having destroyed more youthful attachments, than selfishness, falsehood, or vanity; though all these three have done their part in the work of destruction. It is easy to say, "I care not for such and such injurious reports;" "The opinion of the world is of no consequence to me;" and it is undoubtedly the part of wisdom not to allow such causes to operate against our peace of mind. Unfortunately, however, for us, the world is made up of our friends, as well as of those who are strangers to us; and in this world it is the malignant office of gossip to set afloat rumors of what is evil, rather than statements of what is good. Were such rumors welcomed only by the credulity of strangers, they would certainly be of little consequence to us; but, alas for the faithfulness of affection! our friends, though at first surprised, at last believe them; and then comes the trial of friendship, for to be injuriously and

unjustly thought of by those who ought to know us better, and simply because common report has circulated some charge against us, is that, which, perhaps more than any thing else, destroys our confidence in the profession, the language, the very name of friendship.

The character of woman in every situation in life, has ever been found most admirable, when most severely tried; and I know that her friendship is equal to remaining unshaken by difficulties and dangers, which might well be supposed to move a firmer nature than hers. But I speak of the little trials of minute and every-day experience, for it is against these that woman seldom brings her highest principles and best feelings to bear. It is in the sunshine of society that friendship most frequently withers, because the "love that tempests never shook" may expire under the deadly breathing-upon of common slander.

On the first view of this subject, it seems impossible to believe that mere gossip, which we unanimously agree to regard as being in so many instances false, should operate with such potency in dissolving the tenderest ties of early life. Yet I appeal to experience, and observation too, when I ask, whether the ranks of society are not thronged with individuals closely assimilated in their habits and ways of thinking, mutually in want of the consolations of friendship, and adapted to promote each other's happiness, of whom it may be said with melancholy truth,

"Alas! they had been friends in youth,
But whispering tongues can poison truth."

What then is the part which friendship ought to act in a case where rumor is strong against a friend? The part of true friendship is always a straightforward and decided one. First ask whether the charge brought against your friend be wholly at variance with the principles you know to regulate her conduct in general, wholly at variance with the sentiments uniformly expressed in her confidential intercourse with you, and wholly at variance with the tenor of her previous life.

If such be the case, reject it with a noble indignation; for even if in one instance your friend has actually departed from the general principles of her conduct, her habitual sentiments, and her accustomed mode of action—and if in the end you find that the world has all the while been right, while you have been mistaken—it is better a thousand times to have felt this generous, though misplaced confidence, than to have been hastily drawn in to entertain an injurious suspicion of a friend.

Still, where the evidence is strong against a friend, where it increases and becomes confirmed, it would be blindness and folly to continue to disregard it. But before you yield even to such accumulating evidence, more especially before you act upon it, or suffer one syllable to pass your lips in support of the charge, or even of other charges of a similar nature to that openly alleged, fail not, as you value every thing that is just and equitable in the conduct of one human being towards another—fail not to appeal directly to the injured party, so as to allow her an opportunity of exculpating, or at least of excusing, herself.

If this had but been done in one instance out of a thousand, where slander has scattered her poison upon the foundation of human love, what a different position would woman now maintain in the scale of moral excellence! How much of real good the hand of friendship might by this means have drawn out from seeming evil; how many a wounded bosom the balm of friendship might have healed; how many of those who are now lonely and unloved might have been linked together in the endearing fellowship of mutual affection!

People talk as if the worst thing that could happen to us, was to be deceived; they dare not be generous, they dare not trust, because they should thereby incur the risk of being deceived. That this theory may very properly be acted upon in business, I am quite disposed to allow; but if in friendship there is no other alternative than to listen to injurious rumor, to lean to the side of suspicion,

and to believe the first report against a friend, let me rather be deceived a thousand times, for then I shall at least enjoy the consciousness of having known what it was to trust, as well as love.

Friendship has many trials. Though vanity and selfishness are at the root of many of these, they are for the most part too minute, and apparently too trifling for description. Perhaps the greatest of these arises out of the undue value attached by women to the general attentions of men. For the assistance, the protection, and the disinterested kindness of the other sex, all women ought to be deeply grateful; but for those common attentions which good breeding dictates, without reference to the individual on whom they are bestowed, I own I cannot see why they should ever be so much the subject of envy among women, as to cast a shade upon their intercourse with each other.

This part of my subject necessarily leads me to the consideration of what, for want of a more serious name, I am under the necessity of calling flirtation; by which I would be understood to mean, all that part of the behavior of women which, in the art of pleasing, has reference only to men. It is easy to understand whether a woman is guilty of flirtation or not, by putting her conduct to this simple test: whether, in mixed society, she is the same to women as to men.

Although nothing could be more revolting to the feelings of a true-hearted woman, than needlessly to make a public exposure of the weaknesses and follies of her own sex, yet something of this is not only justifiable, but necessary in the present case, in order to contrast the conduct of those who are truly admirable, with that which is only adopted for the purpose of courting admiration. Nor would I speak uncharitably, when I confess that, like others, I have often seen a drooping countenance suddenly grow animated, an oppressive headache suddenly removed, and many other symptoms of an improved state of health and spirits as suddenly exhibited, when the society of ladies has become

varied by that of the nobler sex; and never does female friendship receive a deeper insult, than when its claims are thus superseded by those, perhaps, of a mere stranger.

Though the practice of flirtation, or the habit of making use of certain arts of pleasing in the society of men, which are not used in that of women, is a thing of such frequent occurrence, that few can be said to be wholly exempt from it—yet we rarely find a woman so lost to all sense of delicacy, as to make an open profession of flirtation. Indeed, I am convinced that some do actually practise it unconsciously to themselves; and for this reason I am the more anxious to furnish them with a few hints, by which they may be better able to detect the follies of their own conduct.

In the first place, then, allow me to ask, why it is necessary, or even desirable, for young women to do more to please men than women? Their best friends, as friends only, will ever be found among their own sex. There is but one relation in life in which any of the men whom they meet with in mixed society can be any thing to them; and surely they can have no thought of marrying half those whom they take more pains to please, than they take in their intercourse with their own sex. What, then, can be the state of mind of her who exercises all her powers of fascination upon beings in whom she can have no deep or real interest? She must have some strong motive, or why this total change in her behavior, so that her female friends can scarcely recognise in her the same individual, who, an hour before, was moping, fretful, listless, and weary of herself and them? She must have some strong motive, and it can be no other than one of these two—either to gain the admiration, or the affection, of all those whom she favors with the full exhibition of her accomplishments in the art of pleasing. If her motive be simply to gain their admiration, it is a blind and foolish mistake into which her vanity has betrayed her, to suppose that admiration is to be purchased by display, or to imagine that

and undisguised claims she makes, are not more calculated to disgust than to attract.

there remains the second, and stronger ; and this would seem, at first sight, and more delicacy of treatment, since generally considered an amiable propension of woman's nature to desire to be beloved.

Let her, however, be honest, sincere, honorable, in the means she adopts for gratification of this desire. Let her re- frain from anything for which she is not prepared to receive an adequate return. The kindness, generosity, the integrity of her character demand this. If, therefore, her desire be to be loved by all those with whom she is connected in the business of flirtation, she is on the one hand involved in a very great and alarming outlay of affection, or, on the other, in a system of selfishness and meanness, for which every honest-hearted man ought to blush. I have used the word selfishness and meanness, because the business of flirtation deserves to be described by these terms ; because it is selfish to endeavor to obtain for which we know that a return is not expected, which we are not the least inclined to make ; because it is mean to use, in the pursuit of it, a degree of art which makes the result appear better, or more admirable, than we are.

It is not good, then, for woman to bear with her, even in early life, the conviction that her only business with men in society, is to earn of them, and not to captivate or to be captivated by them ; for there is a boldness—an impudence, in this exercise of her influence, as it is at variance with good taste, as with common principle, and real feeling. Is it not also, to bear about with her the remem-

ber that no woman ought to be so brilliant or so agreeable in mixed society, as in the domestic circle ? There is no harm in it, if it is at once her privilege, and her duty ; but let her influence through the exercise of this means be what it may, there will be a sad after life sore trials, under which she will regret it all ; and poor indeed is that woman, when affection wanes, and disappoint-

ment chills the glow of youthful ardor, feels that she has expended all her powers of pleasing in public, or upon comparative strangers.

I have said, that all women plead not guilty to the charge of flirtation in themselves ; yet, all are ready to detect and despise it in their friends. All can detect in others, when the bland and beaming smile is put on for the occasion ; when expressive looks are interchanged ; when glittering curls are studiously displayed ; when songs are impressively sung ; when flowers which have been presented, are preserved and worn ; when unnecessary attentions are artfully called forth ; but, above all, for it is best to cut short this catalogue of folly, when conversation is so ingeniously turned as to induce, and almost compel some personal allusion, in which a compliment must almost unavoidably be couched.

And in all this system of absurdity, containing items of folly too numerous for tongue or pen to tell, from the glance of a beautiful eye, to the expression of a mutual sentiment ; from the gathering of a favorite flower, to the awakening of a dormant passion ; from the passing time of an idle moment, to the occupation of years ; in all this, it is deeply to be regretted, that the influence of man is such, as to excite, rather than to repress—to encourage this worse than folly, rather than to warn and to correct. Indeed, whatever may be the excellences of man in every other walk of life, it is a subject of something more than regret, that these excellences are so little called forth in his intercourse with woman in mixed society. As a father, a husband, a brother, and a friend, his character assumes a totally different aspect. And why, I would ask of him, if his eye should ever deign to glance over these pages,—why is he not the friend of woman in society, as well as in the more intimate relations of social and domestic life ?

Time was, when warriors and heroes deemed it not incompatible with glory or renown, to make the cause of helpless woman theirs. Nay, such was the respect in which her claims were held, that the banner could not wave in battle, nor the laurel wreath in peace, so

proudly as when lances were broken, and lays were sung, in defence of her fair fame. On what did that fame then rest?—on what must it rest forever? On her moral purity—on her exemption from mean and grovelling thoughts, and on her aspirations after what is noble, and refined, and true. And is woman less deserving now, than she was a thousand years ago, of the kindness, the protection, the honorable and fair dealing, of man? So far from this, she has made rapid progress in the work of moral renovation, having gained in real worth, more than she has lost in romantic feeling. But one hindrance to her improvement still remains—one barrier against her progress in the path of wisdom and of truth. It is the influence of man, in his intercourse with her in general society.

Perhaps he is not aware how powerful and extensive this influence is, or he would surely sometimes endeavor to turn it to better account. I wish not to describe it in too flattering a manner, by telling how many a young heart is made to throb for the first time with vanity, and idle thoughts, and foolish calculations, in consequence of his flattery and attentions; but it is most important he should know, that while women naturally and necessarily look to the stronger sex to give character and decision to their own sentiments; it is in the common intercourse of society, that such sentiments are implanted, fostered, and matured.

To speak of the popular style of conversation used by gentlemen when making themselves agreeable to young ladies, as trifling, is the best thing we can say of it. Its worst characteristic is its falsehood, while its worst tendency is to call forth selfishness, and to foster that littleness of mind, for which man is avowedly the despiser of woman. If intellectual conversation occupies the company, how often does he turn to whisper nonsense to woman; if he sees her envious of the beauty of her friend, how often does he tell her that her own charms are unrivalled; if he discovers that she is foolishly elated with the triumph of having gained his attentions, how studiously does he feed her folly, waiting only

for the next meeting with a boon companion, to treat the whole with that ridicule which it deserves—deserves, but not from him.

It may be—I would fain believe it is, his wish that woman should be simple-hearted, intelligent, generous, frank, and true; but how is his influence in society exercised to make her any one of these? Woman is blamed, and justly so, for idle thoughts, and trifling conversation; but, I appeal to experience, and ask, whether, when a young girl first goes into society, her most trifling conversation is not that which she shares with men? It is true that woman has the power to repel by a look, a word, or even a tone of her voice, the approach of falsehood or folly; and admirable are the instances we sometimes find of woman thus surrounded as it were by an atmosphere of moral purity, through which no vulgar touch can penetrate. But all are not thus happily sustained, and it seems hard that the weaker sex should not only have to contend with the weakness of their own hearts; but that they should find in this conflict, so much of the influence of man on the side of evil.

In speaking of friendship, I have said nothing of that which might be supposed to exist between the two sexes; because I believe, that, in early youth, but little good can accrue to either party from making the experiment; and chiefly for reasons already stated, that man, in his intercourse with woman, seldom studies her improvement; and that woman, in hers with man, is too much addicted to flirtation. The opinion of the world, also, is opposed to this kind of intimacy; and it is seldom safe, and never wise, to do what society unanimously condemns. Besides which, it is exceedingly difficult for a young and inexperienced girl to know when a man is really her friend, and when he is only endeavoring to gain her favor; the most serious mistakes are, therefore, always liable to be made, which can only be effectually guarded against, by avoiding such intimacies altogether.

Again, it is no uncommon thing for men to betray young women into little deviations from the strict rule of propriety, for their own sakes, or in connection with them; which

deviations they would be the first to condemn, if they were in favor of another. Be assured, however, that the man who does this—who, for his own gratification betrays you into so much as the shadow of an error—who even willingly allows you to be placed in an exposed, a questionable, or even an undignified situation—in short, who subjects you, for his own sake, to the slightest breath of censure, or even of ridicule, is not your real friend, nor worthy so much as to be called your acquaintance.

Fain would we hope and trust, that men who would do this, are exceptions to a general rule; and, honorable it is to the sex, that there are those, who, without any personal interest of their own being involved, are truly solicitous to raise the moral and intellectual standard of excellence among women; men who speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, even to the trusting and too credulous; who never, for the gratification of an idle moment, stoop to lead the unwise still further into folly, the weak into difficulty, or the helpless into distress; men who are not satisfied merely to protect the feeble portion of the community, but who seek to promote the safety and the happiness of woman, by placing her on the sure foundation of sound principle; men who are ready to convince her, if she would but listen to their faithful teaching, that she possesses no beauty so attractive as her simplicity of heart, no charm so lasting as her deep and true affection, and no influence so powerful as her integrity and truth.

I cannot leave the subject of the general behavior of women to the other sex, without adverting to a popular tendency among the young and inexperienced, to attach undue importance to the casual notice of distinguished men; such as popular speakers, eloquent ministers of religion, or any who hold conspicuous situations in society. The most objectionable feature which this tendency assumes, is an extravagant and enthusiastic attachment to ministers of religion. I am aware there is much in the character and office of a faithful minister, justly calculated to

call forth the respectful admiration both of young and old; that there is also much in his pastoral care of the individual members of his flock equally calculated to awaken feelings of deep and strong attachment; and when such feelings are tempered with reverence, and kept under the proper restraint of prudence and good taste, it is unquestionably right that they should be cherished. My remarks can have no reference to young women whose conduct is thus regulated; but there are others, chiefly of enthusiastic temperament, who, under the impression that it is right to love and admire to the utmost of their power, whoever is worthy of admiration, give way to a style of expression, when speaking of their favorite ministers, and a mode of behavior towards them, which is not only peculiarly adapted to expose them, as religious professors, to the ridicule of the world; but which, of itself, too plainly betrays their want of reverence, and right feeling on the subject of religion in general.

But the duties of friendship remain yet to be considered in their highest and most important character. We have never been intimately associated with any one, even in early youth, without having received from them some bias of feeling, either towards good or evil; and the more our affections were engaged in this intimacy, the more decided this bias has been. What, then, has been the nature of our influence upon them?—upon all to whose bosom-confidence we have been admitted? Is this solemn query to be reserved for the hour of death? or is it not the wiser part of youth to begin with its practical application, while the character is yet fresh and pliant, and before the traces of our influence, if wrong, shall have become too deep to be eradicated?

If your friend is further advanced in religious experience than yourself, be willing, then, to learn from her example; but be watchful, also, to point out with meekness and gentleness her slightest deviations from the line of conduct which a Christian professor ought to pursue; and by this means you may not only materially promote her

highest interests, but you may also assist in promoting the interests of religion itself, by preserving it from the calumny and disrespect for which such deviations so naturally give occasion.

If your friend is less advanced than yourself in religious experience, or if, as is most probable, you are both in a backward and defective state, suffer not your mind on any account to become regardless of the important fact, that in proportion to the degree of confidence you have enjoyed with that friend, and in proportion with the hold you have obtained of her affections, is the responsibility you incur with regard to her moral and spiritual advancement. It is fruitless to say, "I see her faults, I mourn over her deviations, but I dare not point them out, lest I wound her feelings, or offend her pride." I know the task is difficult, perhaps the most so of any we ever undertake. But our want of disinterested love, and of real earnestness in the cause of Christ, render it more difficult than it would otherwise be.

We might in this, as in many other instances, derive encouragement from what is accomplished by women in the way of supporting public institutions, and promoting public good. Look at some of the most delicate and sensitive females—how they penetrate the abodes of strangers—how they persevere through dangers and difficulties, repelled by no contumely, and deterred by no hardship, simply because they know that the work in which they labor is the cause of Christ. And shall we find less disinterested zeal, less ardor, less patience, less self-denial, in bosom-friends who share each other's confidence and love?

I am the more anxious to impress these observations upon the young reader, because the present is peculiarly a time for laudable and extraordinary exertions for the public good; and because I am convinced, that benevolent, and highly salutary, as these exertions are, they will never so fully answer the noble end desired, as when supported by the same principles faithfully acted upon in the intimate relations of private life.

CHAPTER X.

LOVE AND COURTSHIP.

LOVE is a subject which has ever been open to discussion, among persons of all classes, and of every variety of mind and character; yet, after all, there are few subjects which present greater difficulties, especially to a female writer. How to compress a subject which has filled so many volumes, into the space of one chapter, is also another difficulty; but I will begin by dismissing a large portion of what is commonly called by that name, as wholly unworthy of my attention; I mean that which originates in mere fancy, without reference to the moral excellence of the object; and if my young readers imagine, that out of the remaining part they shall be able to elicit much amusement, I fear they will be disappointed; for I am one of those who think that the most serious act of a woman's whole life is to love.

What, then, I would ask, is love, that it should be the cause of some of the deepest realities in our experience, and of so much of our merriment and folly?

The reason why so many persons act foolishly, and consequently lay themselves open to ridicule, under the influence of love, I believe to originate in the grand popular mistake of dismissing this subject from our serious reading and conversation, and leaving it to the unceremonious treatment of light novels, and low jests; by which unnatural system of philosophy, that which is in reality the essence of woman's being, and the highest and holiest among her capabilities, bestowed for the purpose of teaching us of how much our nature is capable for the good of others, has become a thing of sly purpose, and frivolous calculation.

The very expression—"falling in love," has done an incalculable amount of mischief, by conveying an idea that it is a thing which cannot be resisted, and which must be given way to, either with or without reason. Persons are said to have fallen in love, precisely as they would be said to have fallen into a fever or an ague-fit; and the worst

of this mode of expression is, that among young people, it has led to a general yielding up of the heart to the first impression, as if it possessed of itself no power of resistance.

It is from general notions such as these, that the idea, and the name of love, have become vulgarized and degraded: and in connection with this degradation, a flood of evil has poured in upon that Eden of woman's life, where the virtues of her domestic character are exercised.

What, then, I would ask again, is love in its highest, holiest character? It is woman's all—her wealth, her power, her very being. Man, let him love as he may, has ever an existence distinct from that of his affections. He has his worldly interests, his public character, his ambition, his competition with other men—but woman centres all in that one feeling, and

“In that *she* lives, or else *she* has no life.”

In woman's love is mingled the trusting dependence of a child, for she ever looks up to man as her protector, and her guide; the frankness, the social feeling, and the tenderness of a sister—for is not man her friend? the solicitude, the anxiety, the careful watching of the mother—for would she not suffer to preserve him from harm? Such is love in a noble mind, and especially in its first commencement, when it is almost invariably elevated, and pure, trusting, and disinterested. Indeed, the woman who could mingle low views and selfish calculations with her first attachment, would scarcely be worthy of the name.

So far from this being the case with women in general, I believe, if we could look into the heart of a young girl, when she first begins to love, we should find the nearest resemblance to what poetry has described, as the state of our first parents when in Paradise, which this life ever presents. All is then colored with an atmosphere of beauty, and light; or if a passing cloud sails across the azure sky, reflecting a transitory shadow on the scene below, it is but to be swept away

by the next balmy gale, which leaves the picture more lovely for this momentary interruption of its stillness and repose.

But that which constitutes the essential charm of a first attachment, is its perfect disinterestedness. She who entertains this sentiment in its profoundest character, lives no longer for herself. In all her aspirations, her hopes, her energies, in all her noble daring, her confidence, her enthusiasm, her fortitude, her own existence is absorbed by the interests of another. For herself, and in her own character alone, she is at the same time retiring, meek, and humble, content to be neglected by the whole world—despised, forgotten, or contemned; so that to one being only she may still be all in all.

And is this a love to be lightly spoken of, or harshly dealt with? Oh no; but it has many a rough blast to encounter yet, and many an insidious enemy to cope with, before it can be stamped with the seal of faithfulness; and until then, who can distinguish the ideal from the true?

I am inclined to think it is from the very purity and disinterestedness of her own motives, that woman, in cases of strong attachment, is sometimes tempted to transgress the laws of etiquette, by which her conduct, even in affairs of the heart, is so wisely restricted. But let not the young enthusiast believe herself justified in doing this, whatever may be the nature of her own sentiments. The restrictions of society may probably appear to her both harsh, and uncalled for; but, I must repeat—society has good reasons for the rules it lays down for the regulation of female conduct, and she ought never to forget that points of etiquette ought scrupulously to be observed by those who have principle, for the sake of those who have not. Besides which, men who know the world so much better than women, are close observers on these points, and nothing can lessen their confidence in you more effectually, than to find you unscrupulous, or lax, even in your behavior to them individually. If, therefore, your lover perceives that you are regardless of the injunctions of your parents or guardi-

ans, even for his sake, though possibly he may feel gratified at the moment, yet his opinion of your principles will eventually be lowered, while his trust in your faithfulness will be lessened in the same degree.

In speaking of the entireness, the depth, and the disinterestedness of woman's love, I would not for a moment be supposed to class under the same head, that precocious tendency to fall in love, which some young ladies encourage under the idea of its being an amiable weakness. Never is the character of woman more despicable, than when she stoops to plead her weakness as a merit. Yet some complain that they are naturally so grateful, it is impossible for them to resist the influence of kindness; and thus they fall in love, perhaps with a worthless man—perhaps with two men at once; simply because they have been kindly treated, and their hearts are not capable of resisting kindness. Would that such puerile suppliants for the charity they ill deserve, could be made to understand how many a correct and prudent woman would have gone inconceivably further than they, in gratitude and generous feeling, had not right principle been made the stay of her conduct, and the arbiter of all her actions. Love which arises out of mere weakness, is as easily fixed upon one object as another; and consequently is at all times transferable: that which is governed by principle, how much has it to suffer, yet how nobly does it survive all trial!

I have said, that woman's love, at least all which deserves that name, is almost universally exalted and noble in its commencement; but that still it wants its highest attribute, until its faithfulness has been established by temptation and trial. Let no woman, therefore, boast of her constancy, until she has been put to the test. In speaking of faithfulness, I am far from supposing it to denote merely the tenacity of adhering to an engagement. It is easy to be true to an engagement, while false to the individual with whom it is contracted. My meaning refers to faithfulness of heart, and this has many trials in the common intercourse of society,

in the flattery and attentions of men, and in the fickleness of female fancy.

To have loved faithfully, then, is to have loved with singleness of heart, and sameness of purpose, through all the temptations which society presents, and under all the assaults of vanity, both from within and without. It is so pleasant to be admired, and so soothing to be loved, that the grand trial of female constancy is, not to add one more conquest to her triumphs, where it is evidently in her power to do so; and, therefore, her only protection is to restrain the first wandering thought which might even lead her fancy astray. The ideas which commonly float through the mind of woman, are so rapid, and so indistinctly defined, that when the door is opened to such thoughts, they pour in like a torrent. Then first will arise some new perception of deficiency in the object of her love, or some additional impression of his unkindness or neglect, with comparisons between him and other men, and regret that he has not some quality which they possess, sadness under a conviction of her future destiny, pining for sympathy under that sadness, and, lastly, the commencement of some other intimacy, which at first she has no idea of converting into love.

Such is the manner in which, in thousands of instances, the faithfulness of woman's love has been destroyed, and destroyed far more effectually than if assailed by an open, and, apparently, more formidable foe. And what a wreck has followed! for when woman loses her integrity, and her self-respect, she is indeed pitiable and degraded. While her faithfulness remains unshaken, it is true she may, and probably will, have much to suffer; but let her portion in this life be what it may, she will walk through the world with a firm and upright step; for even when solitary, she is not degraded. It may be called a cold philosophy to speak of such consolation being available under the suffering which arises from unkindness and desertion, but who would not rather be the one to bear injury, than the one to inflict it; and the very act of bearing it meekly and reverently, as

from the hand of God, has a purifying and solemnizing effect upon the soul, which the faithless and the fickle never can experience.

As friendship is the basis of all true love, it is equally—nay, more important that the latter should be submitted to the same test in relation to its ultimate aim, which ought supremely to be, the moral and spiritual good of its object. Indeed, without this principle at heart, no love is worthy of the name; because, as its influence upon human nature is decidedly the most powerful of any, its responsibilities are in the same proportion serious and imperative. What, then, shall we think of the woman who evinces a nervous timidity about the personal safety of her lover, without any corresponding anxiety about the safety of his soul?

But there is another delusion equally fatal with this, and still more frequently prevailing among well-meaning young woman; I mean, that of listening to the addresses of a gay man, and making it the condition of her marrying him, that he shall become religious. Some even undertake to convert men of this description, without professing any personal interest in the result; and surely, of all the mockeries by which religion is insulted in this world, these are among the greatest. They are such, however, as invariably bring their own punishment; and, therefore, a little observation upon the working of this fallacious system upon others, will probably be of more service to the young, than any observations I can offer. I cannot, however refrain from the remark, that religion being a matter of personal interest, if a man will not submit himself to its influence for his own sake, it is not likely he will do so for the sake of another; and the probability is, that, while endeavoring to convert him, the woman, being the weaker party, will be drawn over to his views and principles; or if hers should be too firm for this, that he will act the hypocrite in order to deceive her, and thus add a new crime to the sum of guilt already contracted.

With a gay man, therefore, a serious woman can have nothing to do, but to contem-

plate his character as she would that of some being of a different order or species from her own. Even after such a man has undergone a moral and spiritual change, there will remain something in his tone of mind and feeling, from which a delicate and sensitive woman will naturally and unavoidably shrink. He will feel this himself; and while the humility and self-abasement which this conviction occasions, will constitute a strong claim upon her sympathy and tenderness, they will both be deeply sensible that, in his heart of hearts, there is a remembrance, a shadow, a stain, which a pure-minded woman must ever feel and sorrow for.

"But how are we to know a man's real character?" is the common question of young women. Alas! there is much willing deception on this point. Yet, I must confess, that men are seldom thoroughly known, except under their own roof, or among their own companions. With respect to their moral conduct, however, if they have a low standard of excellence with regard to the female sex in general, it is an almost infallible sign that their education, or their habits, have been such as to render them undesirable companions in the most intimate and indissoluble of all connections. Good men are accustomed to regard women as equal with themselves in their moral and religious character, and therefore they seldom speak of them with disrespect; but bad men having no such scale of calculation, use a very different kind of phraseology, when women, as a class, are the subject of conversation.

Again, the world is apt to speak of men as being good because they are merely moral. But it would be a safe rule for all Christian women to reflect, that such are the temptations to man in his intercourse with the world, that nothing less than the safeguard of religion can render his conduct uniformly moral.

With regard to the social and domestic qualities of a lover, these must also be tried at home. If disrespectful to his mother, and inconsiderate or ungentle in his manners to his sisters, or even if accustomed to speak of them in a coarse, unfeeling, or indifferent

manner, whatever may be his intellectual recommendations, as a husband he ought not to be trusted. On the other hand, it may be set down as an almost certain rule, that the man who is respectful and affectionate to his mother and his sisters, will be so to his wife.

Having thus described in general terms the manner in which women ought to love, the next inquiry is, under what circumstances this feeling may be properly indulged. The first restriction to a woman of delicacy, of course, will be never to entertain this sentiment towards one by whom it has not been sought and solicited. Unfortunately, however, there are but too many instances in which attentions, so pointed as not to be capable of being misunderstood, have wantonly been made the means of awakening something more than a preference; while he who had thus obtained this meanest of all triumphs, could smile at the consequences, and exult in his own freedom from any direct committal.

How the peace of mind of the young and the trusting is to be secured against such treatment, it is difficult to say; unless they would adopt the advice of the more experienced, and think less of the attentions of men in general, and more of their own immediate and practical duties, which, after all, are the best preservatives, not only against indolence, melancholy, and romance; but against the almost invariable accompaniment of these evils—a tendency to sentimental attachments. I am aware that I incur the risk of being considered among young ladies as too homely in my notions, even for an admonitress, when I so often recommend good old-fashioned household duties; yet, I believe them nevertheless to be a wholesome medicine both to body and mind, and in no case more useful than in those of sentimentality.

In the bestowment of the affections, few women are tempted to make choice of men of weak capacity. Still there is sometimes a plausible manner, a gentlemanly address, or a handsome exterior, which serves for a while to bewilder the judgment, so as to conceal from detection the emptiness within. It

is the constitutional want of woman's nature to have some superior being to look up to; and how shall a man of weak capacity supply this want? He may possibly please for an hour, or a day, but it is a fearful thought to have to dwell with such a one for life.

The most important inquiry, however, to be made in the commencement of an attachment, for it may be too late to make it afterwards, is, whether the object of it inspires with a greater love of all that is truly excellent—in short, whether his society and conversation have a direct tendency to make religion appear more lovely, and more desirable. If not, he can be no safe companion for the intimacy of married life; for you must have already discovered, that your own position as a Christian, requires support rather than opposition. It is the more important, therefore, that this inquiry should be most satisfactorily answered in an early stage of the attachment; because it is the peculiar nature of love to invest with ideal excellence the object of its choice, so that after it has once obtained possession of the heart, there ceases too generally to be a correct perception of good and evil, where the interests of love are concerned.

In addition to this tendency, it is deeply to be regretted, that so few opportunities are afforded to women in the present state of society, of becoming acquainted with the natural dispositions and general habits of those to whom they intrust their happiness, until the position of both is fixed, and fixed for life. The short acquaintance which takes place, under ordinary circumstances, between two individuals about to be thus united, for better for worse, until death do them part, is any thing but a mutual development of real character. The very name of *courtship* is a repulsive one; because it implies merely a solicitude to obtain favor, but has no reference to deserving it. When a man is said to be paying his court to an individual of higher rank or authority, he is universally understood to be using flattery and attention, if not artifice, to purchase what his merits alone would not be sufficient to command. I do

not say that a similar line of conduct is designedly pursued by the lover, because I believe that in many cases he would be glad to have his character more clearly understood than it is. Yet, here we see, most especially, the evil consequences resulting from that system of intercourse, which prevails between the two sexes in general society. By the time a young woman is old enough to enter into a serious engagement, she has generally become so accustomed to receive the flattery and the homage of men, that she would feel it an insult to be treated with perfect honesty and candor; while, on the other hand, her lover redoubles his assiduity to convince her, that if not actually a goddess, she is at least the most charming of her sex. Need we be surprised if there should often be a fearful awaking from this state of delusion?

I must, however, in justice repeat, that the delusion is not all intentional on either part, for a successful suit naturally places a man in so agreeable a position, that his temper and disposition, at such times, appear to the best possible advantage; while on the other hand, it would be strange indeed, if a woman so courted, and apparently admired, could not maintain her sweetest deportment, and wear her blandest smiles, through that short period which some unjustly call the happiest of her life, simply because it is the one in which she is the most flattered, and the most deceived.

It is a very erroneous notion, entertained by some young persons, that to make early pretensions to womanhood, is an embellishment to their character, or a means of increasing their happiness. Nothing in reality can be more entirely a mistake. One of the greatest charms which a girl can possess, is that of being contented to be a girl, and nothing more. Her natural ease of manner, her simplicity of heart, her frankness, her guileless and confiding truth, are all opposed to the premature assumption of womanhood. Even her joyous playfulness, so admirably adapted to promote the health both of mind and body,—oh! why does she hasten to lay all this aside for

the mock dignity of an artificial and would-be woman? Believe me, the latter loses much of the innocent enjoyment of her early years, while she gains in nothing, except a greater necessity for care and caution.

Were it possible to induce the daughters of England to view this subject in its true light, and to endeavor to prolong rather than curtail the season of their simplicity and buoyancy of heart; how much would be avoided of that absurd miscalculation about the desirableness of contracting matrimonial alliances, which plunges hundreds and thousands into the responsible situation of wives and mothers, before they have well learned to be rational women!

A cheerful, active, healthy, and sound-minded girl, is ever the first to glow with the genuine impulse of what is noble and generous in feeling, thought, and action; and at the same time she is the last to be imposed upon by what is artificial, false, or merely superficial; for there seems to be a power in unsophisticated nature, to repel as if by instinct the mean stratagems of art. The vain, the sentimental, would-be woman, sickly for want of natural exercise, and disappointed in her precocious attempts at dignity and distinction, is the last to yield herself to any genuine impulse; because she must inquire whether it is lady-like and becoming; but, alas for her peace of mind! she is the first to listen to the voice of flattery, and to sink into all the absurdities of an early, a misplaced, or an imaginary attachment.

It is not indeed in the nature of things, that a young girl should know how to bestow her affections aright. She has not had experience enough in the ways of the world, or penetrated sufficiently through the smiling surface of society, to know that some who are the most attractive in their address and manners, are the least calculated for fireside companions. They know, if they would but believe what their more experienced relatives tell them, that the happiness of marriage must depend upon suitability of character; yet, even of this they are incompetent to judge, and consequently they are betrayed into mis-

takes sometimes the most fatal to their true interests, both here and hereafter.

How much wiser then is the part of her, who puts off these considerations altogether, until a period of greater maturity of judgment, when much that once looked dazzling and attractive shall have lost its false splendor; and when many qualifications of heart and mind, to which she once attached but little value, shall have obtained their due share of importance in her calculations! Her heart will then be less subject to the dictates of capricious fancy; and, looking at human life, and society, and mankind as they really are; looking at herself, too, with a clearer vision, and a more decided estimate of truth, she will be able to form a correct opinion on that point of paramount importance—suitability of character and habits.

Influenced by a just regard to this consideration, a sensible woman will easily see that the man of her choice must be as much as possible in her own sphere of life. Deficient in education, he would be a rude and coarse companion for a refined woman; and with much higher attainments than her own, he would be liable to regard her with disrespect, if not with contempt.

By a fatal misapprehension of what constitutes real happiness, it is often spoken of as a good and great thing, when a woman raises herself to a higher sphere of society by marriage. Could such individuals tell the story of their after lives, it would often be a history of humiliation and sorrow, for which no external advantages had been able to compensate. There are, however, admirable instances of women, thus exalted, who have maintained their own dignity, and the respect of all their connections; so much more important is moral worth than intellectual cultivation, to a woman. In these cases, however, the chief merit of the wife has been, that she never *sought* her elevation.

Having chosen your lover for his suitability, it is of the utmost consequence, that you should guard against that natural propensity of the youthful mind, to invest him with every ideal excellence. Endeavor to be satis-

fied with him as he is, rather than imagine him what he never can be. It will save you a world of disappointment in after life. Nor, indeed, does this extravagant investiture of the fancy belong, as is sometimes supposed, to that meek, and true, and abiding attachment which it is woman's highest virtue and noblest distinction to feel. I strongly suspect it is vanity, and not affection, which leads a young woman to believe her lover perfect; because it enhances her triumph to be the choice of such a man. The part of a true-hearted woman, is to be satisfied with her lover, such as he is, and to consider him, with all his faults, as sufficiently exalted, and sufficiently perfect for her. No after-development of character can shake the faith of such a woman, no ridicule or exposure can weaken her tenderness for a single moment; while, on the other hand, she who has blindly believed her lover to be without a fault, must ever be in danger of awaking to the conviction that her love exists no longer.

Though truth should be engraven upon every thought, and word, and act, which occurs in your intercourse with the man of your choice, there is implanted in the nature of woman, a shrinking delicacy, which ought ever to prompt her to keep back some of her affection for the time when she becomes a wife. No woman ever gained, but many, very many, have been losers, by displaying all at first. Let sufficient of your love be told, to prevent suspicion, or distrust; and the self-complacency of man will be sure to supply the rest. Suffer it not, then, to be unfolded to its full extent. In the trials of married life, you will have ample need for an additional supply. You will want it for sickness, for sorrow, for all the different exigences of real experience; but, above all, you will want it to re-awaken the tenderness of your husband, when worldly cares and pecuniary disappointments have too much absorbed his better feelings; and what surprise so agreeable to him, as to discover, in his further progress through the wilderness of life, so sweet, so deep a fountain, as woman's perfect love!

This prudent and desirable restraint of fe-

male delicacy during the period of courtship, will prevent those dangerous demands being made upon mere affection to supply interest for an occasion, which after all, and particularly to men of business, is apt to be rather a tedious one. Let your amusements, then, even during that period, be of an intellectual nature, that your lover may never even for a single moment have occasion to feel that your society grows vapid, or palls upon his taste. It is better a thousand times, that reading or conversation, or the company of others, should be forced upon him, so that he should regret having had so little of yours, than that the idea should once glance across his mind, that he had had too much, or that the time spent with you had not passed so pleasantly as he had expected.

It is a fact too little taken into account by young women, that until actually married, their relative and home duties are the same after an engagement has been contracted, as before. When a daughter begins to neglect a father or a brother, for the sake of her lover, it is a bad omen for his happiness. Her attentions in this case are dictated by impulse, not duty; and the same misapprehension of what is just, and right, will in future be equally likely to divert them again from their proper object. It is good even to let your lover see, that such is your estimate of duty, that you can afford even to lose his society for a few minutes, rather than neglect the claims of your family.

I have now imagined a young woman brought into the most serious position she has yet occupied; and if her mind is rightly influenced, she will feel it to be one of deep and solemn consideration. If, during the lapse of her previous existence, she has lived for herself alone, now is the time when her regrets are about to begin; if, as I have so earnestly recommended, she has studiously cultivated habits of duty, and thoughts of affectionate and grateful regard towards her home-connections, now is the time when she will fully enter upon the advantages of having regulated her conduct by the law of love. Already she will have begun to contemplate

the character of man in a new light. Admitted to his confidence, she will find him at the same time more admirable, and more requiring as regards herself, than she found him in society; and while her esteem increases with the development of his real merits, she will feel her affection equal to every demand, for she will be rich in that abundance which the heart alone can supply, whose warmest emotions have been called forth and cherished in the genial and healthy atmosphere of domestic life.

One word, before this chapter closes, to those who have arrived at years of womanhood without having known what it was to engage the attentions of a lover; and of such I must observe, that by some unaccountable law of nature, they often appear to be the most admirable of their sex. Indeed, while a sparkling countenance, an easy manner, and, to say the least of it, a *willingness* to be admired, attract a crowd of lovers—it not unfrequently happens, that retiring merit, and unostentatious talent, scarcely secure the homage of one. And yet, on looking around upon society, one sees so many of the vain, the illiterate, and the utterly useless, chosen and solicited as wives, that we are almost tempted to consider those who are not thus favored, as in reality the most honorably distinguished among their sex.

Still, I imagine there are few, if any, who never have had a suitable or unsuitable offer at some time in their lives; and wise indeed by comparison, are those who, rather than accept the latter, are content to enjoy the pleasures, and endure the sorrows of life, alone. Compare their lot for an instant with that of women who have married from unworthy motives. How incomparably more dignified, more happy, and more desirable in every way, does it appear! It is true there are times in their experience when they will have to bear what woman bears so hardly—the consciousness of being alone; but they escape an evil far more insupportable—that of being a slighted or an unloved wife.

If my remarks throughout this work have

appeared to refer directly to a moral training for the married state, it has not been from any want of interest in those, of whom I purpose to speak more fully hereafter, who never enter upon this condition, but simply because I believe the moral training which prepares a woman for one sphere of duty, is equally productive of benefit if she fills another; and I rest this belief upon my conviction, that all the loveliest and most estimable propensities of woman's nature, were bestowed upon her for early and continued exercise in a strictly relative capacity; and that, whether married or single, she will equally find the law of Christian love the only certain rule by which to regulate her conduct, so as to render her either happy herself, or the promoter of happiness in others.

CHAPTER XL

SELFISHNESS, VANITY, ARTIFICE, AND INTEGRITY.

It is my intention to occupy the present chapter with further observations upon the three great enemies to woman's advancement in moral excellence—selfishness, vanity, and artifice, as opposed to her disinterestedness, simplicity of heart, and integrity.

It seems to be a strange anomaly in her nature, that in connection with all which woman is capable of doing and suffering for the good of others, there should lurk about her heart a peculiar kind of selfishness, which the strong discipline of personal trial, and often of severe affliction, is frequently required to subdue. It is justly remarked of woman, that in cases of afflictive dispensation, the qualities of her heart and mind generally appear to the greatest advantage, and none of them more so, than her devotedness; by which I would be understood to mean, the power she sometimes evinces of throwing every consideration of self into the balance as nothing, when weighed against the interest or the happiness of those she

loves. Supported under some of the most trying vicissitudes of life by this spirit of devotedness, her capabilities of acting and enduring have sometimes appeared almost superhuman; so much so, that when we contemplate woman in this point of view, we almost fail to recognise as a being of the same species, the idle flutterer of the ball-room, or the listless murmurer beside the parental hearth.

It is a fearful thing to await the coming of "the dark days of sorrow," before the evil spirit of selfishness shall be exorcised. Let us inquire, then, what aspect this enemy assumes in early life, in order that it may be the more easily detected, and expelled from its favorite citadel, the human heart.

Selfishness has other features besides greediness. It is a very mistaken notion, that because persons give freely, they cannot be selfish; for there is a luxury in giving, which sentimental epicures will sometimes not deny themselves, even for the sake of principle. Thus, some young people are liberal in making presents with their parents' hard-earned money, and even when the same money would be more properly and more justly applied in paying their lawful debts. Such is the mere generosity of impulse, which deserves no better name than self-gratification. Indeed, all acting from mere impulse may be classed under the head of selfishness; because it has no object beyond the relief or satisfaction of the actor, without reference to its influence or operation upon others.

The aspect which female selfishness most frequently assumes in early life, may best be described as a kind of absorption in self, or a habit of making self at once the centre and limit of every consideration, which habit is far from being incompatible with liberality in giving. Every thing, in this case, which forms the subject of conversation or thought, has reference to self; and separate from self, there are few which possess the slightest interest.

"I wish it was always winter," said a young lady very coolly to me, "the glare of

the sunshine is so painful to my sight." I reminded her of the poor of our own species, and the animals of the creation in general—but she persisted in wishing it was always winter; and yet this young lady was generous in giving, but, like too many others, she was accustomed to look upon the whole universe only as it bore some relation or reference to herself.

Nor does it follow either that such persons should entertain for themselves an inordinate admiration. To hear them talk, one would sometimes be led to suppose that self was the very being with whom, of all others, they were most dissatisfied: yet, all the while, they are too busy finding fault with self, to have time to approve or admire what they might otherwise behold in others.

How different is this state of mind and feeling from that which acknowledges the rule of Christian love! In accordance with this rule, it is highly important to begin early to think much of others, and to think of them kindly. We are all, when young, and especially those who believe themselves gifted with more than ordinary talent, tempted to think it both amusing and clever to find out the faults of others; and among the busy, the meddling, and the maliciously disposed, this habit does often unquestionably afford a more than lawful degree of amusement; while to her by whom it is indulged, it invariably proves in the end most destructive to genuine cheerfulness, good-humor, and peace of mind; because its own nature being offensive, it raises up against her a host of enemies, by whom all that is wrong in her character is magnified, and all that is good is evil spoken of. At the same time she will also find, that this seeming cleverness is also shared with the most vulgar-minded persons of both sexes, and of every grade in society, because none are so low as to be incapable of seeing the faults of their neighbors.

Could such young satirists be convinced how much real enjoyment they sacrifice for the sake of awakening a momentary interest in their conversation, they would surely pause

before the habit should have become so far confirmed as to have repelled their nearest friends, and set them apart from all the social sympathies and sweet charities of life; for such is inevitably the consequence of persevering indulgence in this habit, but especially with such as possess no real talent for amusing satire, and who, in their futile attempts to attain the unenviable distinction of being satirical, ascend no further than to acquire a habit of speaking spitefully. It is almost needless to say, that such women are seldom loved, and seldom sought, in cases where a sympathizing friend or kind assistant is required. When such individuals are overtaken by affliction, they then feel how different a thing it is to have wounded and repelled, from what it is to have soothed and conciliated. Happy for them if they begin to feel this before it is too late!

But if, in connection with their affliction, the minds of such individuals should become subject to impressions of a religious nature, and, as is natural in such cases, they should seek the society of religious people, how deeply will they then deplore that their unfortunate habit of thinking and speaking evil of others should have opened their eyes to a thousand little discrepancies of character, and fancied absurdities of conduct, in those it has become most important to their happiness that they should confide in! How do the ridiculous, the inconsistent, the vulgar, then start up to view, with a prominence that throws every other quality into shade; so that even while they listen to a religious discourse, their thoughts are entirely diverted by some peculiarity in the manner in which it is delivered.

And all this chain of sad consequences may arise out of the simple habit of trying to be striking and amusing in company, so that self may, by that means, be made an object of greater importance. In comparison with such behavior, how beautiful is that of the simple-hearted young woman, who can be so absorbed in the conversation of others, as to forget that she has taken no part in it herself; but more especially admirable is the

conduct of her, who looks only, or chiefly, for what is to be loved and commended in others; and who, though not insensible to the darker side of human nature, draws over it the veil of charity, because she considers all her fellow-creatures as heirs to the same sufferings and infirmities which she endures, yet as children of the same heavenly Father, and subject with herself to the same dispensation of mercy and forgiveness.

The habit of thinking perpetually of self is always accompanied by its just and necessary punishment—a more than ordinary share of wounded feeling. The reason is a very obvious one; that persons whose thoughts are usually thus engaged, are apt to suppose themselves the subject of general observation, and scarcely can a whisper be heard in the same room, but they immediately settle it in their own minds that they are the subject of injurious remark. They are also keenly alive to every slight; such as not being known or noticed when they are met, not being invited to visit their friends, and a thousand other acts of omission, which an unselfish disposition would kindly attribute to some other cause than intentional disrespect.

It is the result of selfishness, too, when we are so unreasonable as to expect that everybody should love us; or when we are piqued and irritated when convinced that some, upon whom we have but little claim, do not. Surely, so unfair a demand upon the goodwill of society might be cured by asking, Do we love everybody, do justice to everybody, and deserve to be loved by everybody? For, until this is the case, what title have we to universal affection? It might also tend, in some degree, to equalize the balance of requirement in favor of self, if we would recollect that the faults we most dislike in others, may, all the while, be less offensive to us than ours to them; and that not only for all the actual faults, but even for the objectionable peculiarities, which society puts up with in us, we owe a repayment which can only be made in kindness and forbearance to others.

In the manners and appearance of persons accustomed to dwell much upon the slights

they are subject to, and the injuries they receive from others, there is a restless uneasiness, and a tendency to groundless suspicion, as much at variance with peace of mind, as with that charity which "thinketh no evil." Compare with such a state of mind and feeling the sunny calm which lives, even in the countenance of her, whose soul is at peace with all the human race; who finds in all, even the most humble, something either to admire, or love; and who esteems whatever kindness she receives from others, as more than her own merits would have entitled her to expect; and we see at once the advantage she enjoys over those with whom self is the subject of paramount interest.

Another fatal enemy to woman's peace, as well as to her moral and spiritual advancement, is her tendency to a peculiar kind of petty artifice, as directly opposed, in its nature, to simplicity of heart, as to integrity. Artifice may possibly be considered too severe a name for what is scarcely more than a species of acting; or, perhaps, it may, with still greater propriety, be called, practising upon others, for the purpose of gratifying selfishness, and feeding vanity.

Affectation is the first symptom of this tendency. There are many kinds of affectation, differing in their moral nature according to the seriousness and importance of what is affected. Affectation of ignorance is, perhaps, the most absurd of them all. Yet how often do we find a young pretender to gentility affecting not to know any thing which is vulgar or mean; and, among this class, taking especial pains to place many things with which every rational being ought to be acquainted!

The affectation of sensibility is, perhaps, the most common of all; because that peculiar faculty of the female mind, bestowed for the purpose of rendering her more efficient as a minister of comfort and consolation, is looked upon rather as a matter of taste, than as a principle; just as if fine feelings were only given to women to look pretty with. Women who are vain of their sensibility, and wish to have it indulged, generally choose

weak and flattering friends, to whom they constantly complain of what they suffer from excess of feeling.

It is, indeed, a lamentable fact, and most probably the consequence of some mismanagement in early youth, that the sensitiveness of some women is such as to render them altogether useless, and sometimes worse than useless, in any case of suffering or alarm. If such individuals sincerely regret this disqualification, they are truly deserving of our pity; but if they make a parade of it, no language can be strong enough for their condemnation.

Allusion has already been made to that affectation of modesty which consists in simpering and blushing about what a truly delicate mind would neither have perceived nor understood, nor would have been in the slightest degree amused by if it had.

Affectation of humility is often betrayed by a proneness in persons to accuse themselves of some darling fault; while they repel with indignation the suspicion that they possess any other.

That kind of affectation which relates especially to manner, consists chiefly in assuming a particular expression of countenance, or mode of behavior, which is not supported by a corresponding state of feeling. Thus an affectation of attention, when the thoughts are wandering, instead of that quiet and fixed look which indicates real interest, produces a certain degree of uneasiness of countenance arising out of the restraint imposed upon nature, which effectually destroys the power of beauty; while those futile attempts at being brilliant, which consist only in flashes of the eye, smiles that have neither appropriateness nor meaning, and an expression of face changing suddenly from grave to gay—from despair to rapture—are sufficient indications of a state of mind almost too degraded and deplorable for ridicule.

Affectation of manner, however, is not unfrequently the result of excessive timidity; and then indeed it claims our tenderest compassion, and our kindest sympathy. I have known little girls, when harshly treated in

childhood, acquire a constrained and affected manner, from the constant state of unnatural apprehension in which they lived. This kind of affectation is apt to become in after years a fixed habit, and has subjected many a well-meaning person to unmerited ridicule, and sometimes to contempt. Indeed, affectation of manner ought always to be guarded against, because of the unfavorable impression it is calculated to make upon others; and especially upon those who know of no higher qualities in connection with this peculiarity of manner, and upon whom it is consequently the only impression ever made, and the only standard by which the unfortunate subject of affectation is judged of for life. How much of the influence of good example, and the effect of benevolent effort, is frustrated by this seemingly insignificant cause, may be judged of by the familiar conversation which takes place in society, and particularly among the young, when they discuss the merits or demerits of persons from whose influence or authority they would gladly discover a plea for escaping.

Besides the timidity which belongs to constitutional fear, and which so frequently produces affectation of manner, there is a timidity of a widely different kind, about which many serious mistakes are made. I mean the timidity of the vain. Excessive vanity, excites a nervous trembling apprehension in the young candidate for public favor, which is often most erroneously supposed to arise from a low estimate of self. Nor is it impossible that it should arise from this cause, and be the consequence of vanity still; for, if I may use the expression, there is a vanity above par, and another vanity below it—there is a vanity which looks eagerly for homage, believing it to be a right; there is another which scarcely ventures into the field of competition, convinced of its inadequacy to succeed, but which nevertheless, retires with a feeling of sullenness and depression, not much allied to genuine humility. It is that state of vacillation between the excessive pleasure which admiration would afford if obtained, and the excessive pain which any

thing approaching to ridicule or contempt would occasion, that often imparts to the manners of the young, a blushing nervous kind of hesitation and backwardness, mis-called timidity. The timidity of modest feeling escapes from notice, and is happy ; that of vanity escapes, and is piqued and miserable. She who suffers from the timidity of vanity, shrinks from society higher than herself, not so much from fear, as from jealousy of being outshone. The simple-hearted woman, desirous of improvement, esteems it a privilege to go into the company of her superiors, for the sake of what she may learn from those who are better informed, or more estimable, than herself.

In contemplating the nature and effects of artifice, or rather that system of practising upon others which I have endeavored to describe, and in reflecting upon the state of mind which this species of practising indicates, we arrive at a more clear and decided idea of integrity, as directly opposed to this system, than we can by any other process of thought. There is in fact no means of giving a positive definition of integrity, so as to make it fully understood. We may call it a straightforward and upright mode of conduct ; but it will still remain, as before, to be considered by young ladies a sort of thing which belongs to servants and trades-people, but not to them.

It is a matter of surprise to some, and ought to be a subject of universal regret, that in our public seminaries for the training of youth, integrity should occupy so small a share of attention. Even in our popular works on education, it holds no very important place ; and yet I am inclined to think, that a want of strict integrity is the greatest of all wants to a social, moral, and accountable being. In this opinion, I doubt not but many of my readers will cordially agree, because all are more or less inclined to restrict the meaning of integrity, to a conscientious abstaining from fraudulent practices. Thus, when a man has never been known to cheat in his business, it is said of him, that his integrity is unimpeachable ; and a woman is

dignified with the same character, when she is strict in keeping her accounts, and discharging her pecuniary debts. So far, both are entitled to our respect ; but there are innumerable modes in which integrity operates upon character and conduct, besides what relate to the management of pecuniary affairs.

Simplicity of heart is perhaps more generally understood and admired than integrity, if we may judge by the frequent and eloquent manner in which it is expatiated upon by those who describe the attractions of youth. Simplicity of heart is unquestionably a great charm in woman ; yet I cannot think it superior to integrity, because it consists more in ignorance of evil, and consequently of temptation, than in principle, which would withstand both. It consists chiefly in that unruffled serenity of soul, which suspects no lurking mischief beneath the fair surface of things in general—which trusts, and confides, and is happy in this confidence ; because it has never been deceived, nor has learned the fatal mystery of deceiving others. It is like the dew on the untrodden grass, the bloom of the flower, the down on the butterfly's wing, the purity of newly-fallen snow, before even a breath of wind has swept over it. Alas ! what has it to do in this world of ours, where so many rude feet tread, and where so many rough winds blow ? Consequently we find but little true simplicity of heart, except in early youth ; or connected with a dullness of perception as to the nature and condition of the human race ; or in situations where a very limited knowledge of the world is admitted.

But integrity we may find in every circumstance of life, because integrity is founded on principle ; and consequently while not a stranger to temptation, its nature is to withstand it. Integrity is shown in a straightforward and upright line of conduct, on trifling, as well as on great occasions ; in private, as well as in public ; beneath the eye of God alone, as well as before the observation of men. It is a shield of protection under which no man can make us afraid ; because when actuated in all things

by the principle of integrity, no unexpected event can bring to light what we are afraid or ashamed to have known. The woman who walks through the world with unstained integrity, is always safe. No fear then of whispering tongues; or of those confidential revealings of friendly secrets, by which the creature of artifice is ever kept in a state of dread; no fear then of a comparing of evidence by different parties; of the treachery of private agents; of the mal-occurrence of contingent events; above all, of that half-implied suspicion which can with difficulty be warded off, except by an entire falsehood. The woman of integrity fears none of these. Her course is clear as that of the sun in the heavens, and the light she sheds around her in society, is scarcely less genial and pure.

Let us ask then, how this integrity may be preserved, or rather—for I fear that will be more to the purpose—how it is most frequently, and most fatally destroyed.

There is reason to fear, that even home-education is defective enough on this point; but if every one who has been educated at a public school, would tell one half of the many arts of subterfuge, trickery, and evasion, which she learned to practise there; and if all who are advanced in life would also trace out the consequences upon their subsequent conduct, of having learned in early life these lessons in the school of deception, I believe an amount of moral culpability, and of offensiveness in the sight of God, would be unfolded, which some of our early instructors would shudder to contemplate. On looking into the dark past, they would then see how, while they were so diligently and patiently—yes, and meritoriously too, teaching us the rules of grammar, arithmetic, and geography; expending their daily strength, and often their midnight thought, in devising and carrying out improved schemes for making us learn more languages, and remember more words; we had been almost equally busy in devising schemes to promote our own interest, to establish ourselves in the favor of our instructors, or to escape their too frequently well-merited displeasure.

And women from their very infancy are apt at all this; because to the timid, and affectionate little girl, it is so sad a thing to fall into disgrace—so pleasant a thing to be approved, and loved. Her young and tender spirit sinks like a broken flower, when she falls under condemnation; but springs up exulting like the lark, when commended by the lips she loves.

What, then, shall we say, when it is this very sensitiveness and tenderness of her nature, which so often, in the first instance, betrays her into ingenious, indirect, and too frequently unlawful means, for warding off blame, or obtaining praise. There is but one thing we can say—that in common kindness, in Christian charity, her education should be studiously rendered such as to strengthen her under this weakness; not to involve her more deeply in its worst consequences—the loss of her integrity.

Few persons are aware, until they have entered into a full and candid examination of this subject, how very minute, and apparently insignificant, are those beginnings, from whence flow some of the deepest channels of deception. Falsehood makes a serious beginning at school, when the master helps out a drawing, and the pupil obtains the praise, as if the whole work was her own. The master has most probably added only a few effective touches, so extremely small as not to be detected by an unpractised eye; and while the proud and triumphant mother exhibits the drawing to her flattering friends, it would be difficult indeed for the little girl to say it was not her own doing, because all the patience, all the labor, and a great deal of the merit, were unquestionably hers. Yet, to let it pass with these unqualified commendations bestowed upon her as the author, is a species of lying to God. Her young heart knows it to be so, and she feels either humbled, or confirmed in the deception. Happy, thrice happy, if it be the former!

Nor is home-education by any means exempt from its temptations to falsehood. There are many little deceptions practised upon unsuspecting mothers and absent fathers, which

stain the page of youthful experience, and lead to further and more skilful practice in the school of deception. There are stolen sweets, whose bitter fruit has been deliberate falsehood; excuses made, and perhaps wholly believed, which were perhaps only half true; and sly thefts committed upon household property, to serve a selfish end; all which have had a degrading effect upon the character, and which in their worst consequences have led to one falsehood made use of to conceal another, and a third or a fourth to cover both.

But if childhood is beset with these temptations, how much has woman to guard against, when she first mixes with society, and enters the disputed ground, where, to be most agreeable, constitutes the strongest title to possession! She is then tempted to falsehood, not in her words only, but in her looks; for there is a degree of integrity in looks, as well as in expressions; and I am not quite sure that the woman who can look a falsehood, is not a worse deceiver than she who only tells one. All sweetness of look and manner, assumed for the purpose of gaining a point, or answering a particular end, comes under this description of artifice. Many persons who cannot conscientiously assent to what is said, assume a look of sympathy or approval, which sufficiently answers the purpose of deception, and at the same time escapes all risk of discovery as such. Thus, an implied assent by a smile and a nod, to what we do not believe, often spares us the trouble and pain of exposing our real sentiments, where they are unpopular, or would be likely to meet with inconvenient opposition.

Still I should be sorry to set down all persons who smile, and nod, and appear to assent to two different sides of a question, as intentional deceivers; because I believe that much of this sort of double-dealing arises out of the habit so many women indulge, of never making up their minds decidedly on any point of general interest, or viewing any subject in a distinct and determinate manner; so that they may almost be said really to think for the time in two different ways: at any rate, during

the time they listen to each speaker separately, they are sufficiently convinced for them.

Thus it becomes the first act of integrity to endeavor to see, hear, and believe the truth, and then to speak it. A grateful woman, regardless of this rule, speaks of all persons as good, to whom she is indebted, or who have in any way served her purposes. Another, and a far more serious instance of the same kind of practice, consists in pretending not to see, or not to understand vice, where it is not convenient to believe in its existence; and this is often done by the same persons, who are quick to detect and expose it where such exposure is suited to their purpose.

And thus women in general become habituated to an indefinite way of thinking, and a careless mode of speech, both which may be serviceable to the mean-spirited, by preventing the detection of error in sentiment, or unsoundness of principle; though I believe neither of them were ever yet found available in assisting the cause of truth or righteousness.

Again, in the act of doing good, there is a manner of speaking of what we have done, which, though not directly false, is certainly at variance with strict integrity. I mean when young ladies talk especially about *their* schools, *their* poor women, and *their* old men; as if their individual charities were most benevolent in their operation, and unbounded in their extent; when perhaps they have but recently begun to be exercised in these particular channels. This is speaking the truth in such a *manner*, as to produce a false impression; and the consequence not unfrequently is, when really zealous and devoted people hear the speaker give this account of her good deeds, and when they take up the subject, and address her upon it, according to the impression her words have produced; that, rather than descend from the false position she has assumed, and lower herself in the opinion of those with whom she wishes to stand well, she goes on to practise further artifice, or possibly plunges into actual falsehood.

And it ought always to be borne in mind, that these little casual, but sometimes start-

ling turns in common conversation, produce more actual untruths than the most trying circumstances in life, where we have incomparably more at stake. If we were all to take account each night of the untruths we had told in the course of the day, from an exaggerated description designed to make a story more amusing, down to the frequent case of receiving credit for an original remark, which we knew was not our own, I imagine few persons would find themselves altogether clear of having done violence to the pure spirit of truth. And if we add, also, to this list of falsehoods, all those unfair or garbled statements, which may tend to throw a brighter coloring over some cause we wish to advocate, or cast another into shade, I believe we should find that we had indeed abundant need to pray for the renewed assistance of the Holy Spirit, to touch and guard our lips, so that they should utter no more guile.

Besides these instances of the want of integrity, in which our own consciences alone are concerned, there are others which demand a stricter attention to the claims of justice, as they relate to our friends, and to society at large. Under which head, I would notice the duty of doing justice to those we do not love, and especially to those who have injured us. Instead of which, how frequently do we find that young women begin to tell all the bad qualities of their friends, as soon as they have quarrelled with them! How often do we find, too, that such disagreements are related with conscious unfairness, their own evil being kept out of sight, as well as their friend's good, where there has been a mixture of both!

There is a common practice too, when our own conduct is in any way called in question, and our friends kindly assign a plausible reason for what we have done, to let that pass as the real one, though we know, within our hearts, it is not so; or to let persons make a favorable guess respecting us, without contradicting it, though we know their conclusions, in consequence of our silence, or apparent assent, will be false ones.

Now, all these things, how insignificant soever they may appear to man, are important between the soul and its Maker, and must be deeply offensive in the sight of that Being who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. They are important, as forming parts of a whole, items of a mass, links in a chain, steps in a downward progress, which must lead away from a participation with the blessed, in a kingdom, whose enjoyments consist of purity and truth.

We have now come to that consideration of the subject of integrity, which relates to pecuniary affairs. And here what a field of operation opens before us, for the development of those principles of good or evil, of benevolence or selfishness, of uprightness or artifice, which I have endeavored to describe, less by their own nature, than by their influence upon the manners and general conduct of women!

I believe there is nothing in the usages of society more fatal to the interests of mankind, to the spiritual progress of individuals, or to the general well-being of the human soul, than laxity of principle as regards our pecuniary dealings with each other. It is a case which all can understand—the worldly, as well as religious professors; if, then, the slightest flaw appears in the conduct of the latter in this respect, the interests of religion must be injured in consequence, and the cause of Christ must suffer.

"But it is impossible," say the fair readers of this page, "that this part of the subject can have any reference to us, we have so little to do with money;" or, perhaps, they say, "so little in our power to spend." Perhaps it is the very smallness of your supply according to the ideas you have formed of its inadequacy to meet your wishes, which is the cause of your want of integrity; for no one can act in strict accordance with the principles of integrity, until they have learned to practise economy. By economy, I do not mean simply the art of saving money, but the nobler science of employing it for the best purposes, and in its just proportions.

In order to act out the principles of integ-

rity in all their dignity, and all their purity, it is highly important, too, that young women should begin in early life to entertain a scrupulous delicacy with regard to incurring pecuniary obligations; and especially, never to throw themselves upon the politeness of gentlemen, to pay the minutest sum in the way of procuring for them gratification, or indulgence. I do not say that they may not frequently be so circumstanced, as, with the utmost propriety, to receive such kindness from near relations, or even from elderly persons; but I speak of men in general, upon whom they have not the claim of kindred; and I have observed the carelessness with which some young ladies tax the politeness—nay, the purses of gentlemen, respecting which it would be difficult to say, whether it indicated most an absence of delicate feeling, or an absence of integrity.

I am aware, that, in many cases, this unsatisfactory kind of obligation is most difficult to avoid, and, sometimes, even impossible; yet, a prompt and serious effort should always be made—and made in such a way that you shall clearly be understood to have both the wish, and the power, to pay your own expenses. If the wish is wanting, I can have nothing to say in so humiliating a case; but if you have not the means of defraying your own charges, it is plain that you have no right to enjoy your pleasures at the expense of another. There are, however, different ways of proposing to discharge such debts; and there is sometimes a hesitancy in the alternate advance and retreat of the fair lady's purse, which would require extraordinary willingness on the part of the gentleman, were his object to obtain a repayment of his own money.

It is the same in the settlement of all other debts. Delicacy ought seldom, if ever, to form a plea for their adjustment being neglected. Indeed, few persons feel their delicacy much wounded, by having the right-money paid to them at the right time; or, in other words, when it is due. The same remarks will apply to all giving of commissions. Never let such affairs stand on and

on, for want of a suitable opportunity for arranging their settlement; especially, never let the payment of a debt be longer delayed, because it is evidently forgotten by the party to whom it is owing.

All matters of business should also be adjusted as fairly, and as promptly, with friends and near relations, as with strangers; and all things in such cases should be as clearly understood. If the property transferred be intended as a gift, say so; if a loan, say that the thing is lent; and if a purchase, either pay for it, or name the price you expect. How many lasting and lamentable misunderstandings among the nearest connections would this kind of integrity prevent—how much wounded feeling, disappointment, and chagrin!

It is a mistaken view of economy, and evinces a great want of integrity, when persons are always endeavoring to obtain services, or to purchase goods, at a lower rate than their *just* value. But if the vender of an article be indebted to you for a kindness, it is something worse than mean, to ask, for that reason, an abatement in its price.

In many cases where our claims are just, it is easy to press them in an unjust manner; and we never do this more injuriously to the interests of society, than when we urge work-people beyond what is necessary, by telling them that a thing will positively be needed at a certain time, when we do not really believe it will. There is a general complaint against dressmakers, shoemakers, and many other makers of articles of clothing, that they are habitually regardless of punctuality and truth. But I am disposed to think the root of the grievance in a great measure arises out of the evil already alluded to, on the part of the ladies by whom they are employed.

Let us imagine the case of a young dress-maker, one of that most pitiable class of human beings, whose pallid countenances, and often deformed and feeble frames, sufficiently attest the unnatural exertions by which they obtain their scanty bread. A young lady wishes to have a dress elaborately made, and for the sake of having it done expeditiously, names the precise day on which it must be

finished, adding as a sufficient reason for punctuality, that it must then be worn. The poor dressmaker sits all night long in her little joyless room, working by the light of a thin candle, while the young lady sleeps soundly in her bed. The Sabbath dawns, and the dressmaker is still at work; until passing feet begin to be heard in the street, and shutters are unclosed; and then, with aching head and weary limbs, she puts away her unfinished task, doubting whether the remainder of the day shall be devoted to the sleep which exhausted nature demands, or to wandering abroad to search for purer air, of which that nature is equally in need. The day arrives at last on which the dress must be taken home, according to appointment. This time the dressmaker is punctual, because she believes that delay would be of consequence. She knocks at the door of the lady's mansion. The servant coolly tells her that her young mistress has gone to spend a few days in the country. Is it likely that this poor workwoman should be equally punctual the next time her services are required? or need we ask how the law of love has operated here?

The habit of keeping strict accounts with regard to the expenditure of money, is good in all circumstances of life; but it is never so imperative a duty, as when we have the property of others committed to our care. Unfaithfulness in the keeping and management of money which belongs to others, has perhaps been the cause of more flagrant disaster and disgrace, than any other species of moral delinquency which has stained the character of man, or woman either. Yet, how easily may this occur, without an extreme of scrupulous care, which the young cannot too soon, or too earnestly learn to practise! Even in the collecting of subscriptions for two different purposes, small sums, by some slight irregularity, may become mixed; and integrity is sacrificed, if the minutest fraction be eventually placed to the wrong account.

I cannot for an instant suppose that a Christian woman, under any circumstances,

even the most difficult and perplexing, could be under the slightest temptation to appropriate to her own use, for a month, a week, a day, or an hour, the minutest item of what she had collected for another purpose, trusting to her own future resources for its reimbursement; because this would be a species of dishonesty, which, if once admitted as a principle of conduct, would be liable to terminate in the most fearful and disastrous consequences. It is the privilege of the daughters of England, that they have learned a code of purer morals, than to admit even such a thought, presented under the form of an available means of escape from difficulty, or attainment of gratification. Still it is well to fortify the mind, as far as we are able, against temptation of every kind, that if it should occur—and who can be secure against it?—we may not be taken unawares by an enemy whose assaults are sometimes as insidious, as they are always untiring.

One of the means I would now propose to the young reader, is to turn with serious attention to the case of Ananias and Sapphira, as related in the Acts of the Apostles; nor let it be forgotten, that this appalling act of moral delinquency, originating in selfishness, and terminating in falsehood, was the first sin which had crept into the fold of Christ, after the Shepherd had been withdrawn, and while the flock remained in a state approaching the nearest to that of perfect holiness, which we have reason to believe was ever experienced on this earth, since the time when sin first entered into the world.

Yes, it is an awful and impressive thought, that even in this state, temptation was allowed to present itself in such a form, accompanied with a desire still to stand well with the faithful, even after integrity was gone. The words of Peter are most memorable on this occasion: *While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?* Evidently implying, that it was better not to pretend to act upon high and generous principles, than not to do so faithfully. He then concludes in this emphatic language: *"Thou has not lied unto*

men, but unto God." By which we learn, that every species of dishonesty practised between the soul and its Maker, is equally offensive in the sight of God, as that which is evident to men; and that there is no clear, upright, and faithful walk for any human being in this world, whether young or old, whether rich or poor, whether exalted or lowly, but that which is in strict accordance with the principles of integrity.

CHAPTER XII.

DEDICATION OF YOUTH.

WITHOUT having made any pretension in this volume to class it under the head of a religious work, I have endeavored to render it throughout conducive to the interests of religion, by pointing out those minor duties of life, and those errors of society, which strictly religious writers almost universally consider as too insignificant for their attention. And, perhaps, it is not easy to interweave these seeming trifles in practice, with the great fundamental principles of Christian faith.

I cannot but think, however, that to many, and especially to the young, this minuteness of detail may have its use, by bringing home to their attention familiar instances upon which Christian principle may be brought to bear. For I am one of those who think that religion ought never to be treated or considered as a thing set apart from daily and familiar use, to be spoken of as belonging almost exclusively to sabbaths, and societies, and serious reading. To me it appears that the influence of religion should be like an atmosphere, pervading all things connected with our being; that it ought to constitute the element in which the Christian lives, more than the sanctuary into which he retires. When considered in this point of view, nothing can be too minute to be submitted to the test of its principles; so that, instead of our worldly and our spiritual con-

cerns occupying two distinct pages in our experience, the one, according to this rule, becomes regulated by our spiritual views; and the other applied to our worldly avocations, as well as to our eternal interests.

In relation to this subject it has been remarked, in the quaint language of an old writer, that no sin is "little in itself, because there is no *little* law to be despised—no *little* heaven to be lost—no *little* hell to be endured;" and it is by this estimate that I would value every act, and every thought, in which the principles of good and evil are involved.

The great question, whether the principles of Christian faith, or, in other words, whether the religion of the Bible, shall be adopted as the rule of conduct by the young, remains yet to be considered, not in relation to the nature of that faith, but as regards the desirableness of embracing it at an early period of life, willingly and entirely, with earnestness as well as love.

I am writing thus on the supposition, that, with all who read these pages, convictions of the necessity and excellence of personal religion have at one time or other been experienced. The opinion is general, and, I believe, correct, that the instances are extremely rare in which the Holy Spirit does not awaken the human soul to a sense of its real situation as an accountable being, passing through a state of probation, before entering upon an existence of endless duration. Nor among young persons born of Christian parents, and educated in a Christian country, where the means of religious instruction are accessible to all, is it easy to conceive that such convictions have not, at times, been strong and deep; though, possibly, they may have been so neglected as to render their recurrence less frequent, and less powerful in their influence upon the mind.

Still it is good to recall the time when the voice of warning, and of invitation, was first heard; to revisit the scene of a father's faithful instruction, and of the prayers of a lost mother; to hear again the sabbath-evening sermon; to visit the cottage of a dying

Christian ; or even to look back once more into the chamber of infancy, where our first tears of real penitence were shed. It is good to remember how it was with us in those by-gone days when we welcomed the chastisements of love, and kissed the rod that was stretched forth by a Father's hand. How blest did we then feel, in the belief that we were not neglected, not forgotten, not overlooked ! Has any thing which the world we have too much loved has since offered us, afforded a happiness to be compared with this belief ! Oh ! no. Then why not hearken, when the same voice is still inviting you to come ! and why not comply when the same hand is still pointing out the way to peace ! What is the hindrance which stands in your way ? What is the difficulty which prevents the dedication of your youth to God ? Let this question be seriously asked, and fully answered ; for it is of immense importance that you should know on what grounds the invitations of the Holy Spirit have been rejected, and why you are adopting another rule of conduct than that which is prescribed in the gospel of Christ.

I repeat, it is of immense importance, because this is a subject which admits of no trifling. If it is of importance in every branch of mental improvement, that we should be active, willing, earnest, and faithful, it is still more important here. When we do not persevere in learning, it does not follow of necessity that we grow more ignorant ; because we may remain where we are, while the rest of the world goes on. But in religion, there is no standing still ; because opportunities neglected, and convictions resisted, are involved in the great question of responsibility—so that no one can open their Bible, or attend the means of religious instruction, or spend a Sabbath, or even enter into solemn communion with their own heart, as in the sight of God, but they must be so much the worse for such opportunities of improvement, if neglected or despised.

I have dwelt much in this volume upon the law of perfect love, as well as upon the sincerity and the faithfulness with which that

law should be carried out ; and never is this more important, or more essential, than in our religious profession. The very groundwork of the Christian faith is love ; and love can accomplish more in the way of conformity in life and practice, than could ever be effected by the most rigid adherence to what is believed to be right, without assistance from the life-giving principle of love.

Still the state of the Christian in this world is always described as one of warfare, and not of repose ; and how, without earnestness, are temptations to be resisted, convictions acted upon, or good intentions carried out ? As time passes on, too, faithfulness is tried. What has been adopted, or embraced, must be adhered to. And in this, with many young persons, consists the greatest of their trials ; for there is often a reaction on first learning to understand something of the realities of life, which throws them back from the high state of expectation and excitement, under which they first embraced religious truth.

But let us return to the objections which most frequently operate to prevent the young surrendering themselves to their convictions of the importance and necessity of personal religion. "If I begin, I must go on." Your mind is not then made up. You have not counted the cost of coming out from the world, nor honestly weighed the advantages of securing the guidance, support, and protection of personal religion, against every other pursuit, object, or idol of your lives. Perhaps it is society, amusement, or fashion, which stands in your way. Be assured there is society of the highest order, where religion is supreme ; and if not exactly what is popularly called amusement, there is a heartfelt interest in all which relates, however remotely, to the extension of the kingdom of Christ—an interest unknown to those who have no bond of union, founded upon the basis of Christian love.

Is it possible, then, that fashion can deter you—fashion, a tyrant at once both frivolous and cruel—fashion, who never yet was rich enough to repay one of her followers, for the

sacrifice of a single happy hour—fashion, whose realm is folly, and who is perpetually giving place to sickness, sorrow, and the grave? Compare for one instant her empire with that of religion. I admit that her power is extensive, almost all-pervading; but what has her sovereign sway effected upon the destinies of man? She has adjusted ornaments, and selected colors; she has clothed and unclothed thousands, and arrayed multitudes in her own livery—but never has fashion bestowed dignity or peace of mind upon one single individual of the whole family of man.

It would be an insult to the nature and the power of religion to proceed further with the comparison. Can that which relates merely to the body, which is fleeting as a breath, and unstable as the shadow of a cloud, deter from what is pure, immortal, and divine?

Still I am aware it is easy, in the solitude of the chamber, or in the privacy of domestic life, to think and speak in this exalted strain, and yet to go into the society of the fashionable, the correct, and the worldly-minded, who have never felt the necessity of being religious, and to be suddenly brought, by the chilling influence of their reasoning or their satire, to conclude that the convenient season for you to admit the claims of religion upon your heart and life, has not yet arrived.

I believe the most dangerous influence, which society exercises upon young women, is derived from worldly-minded persons, of strong common sense, who are fashionable in their appearance, generally correct in their conduct, and amiable and attractive in their manners and conversation. Young women guardedly and respectfully brought up see little of vice, and know little of

"The thousand paths which slope the way to sin."

They are consequently comparatively unacquainted with the beginnings of evil, and still less so with those dark passages of life, to which such beginnings are calculated to lead. It follows, therefore, that, except when under the influence of strong convictions,

they may be said to be ignorant of the real necessity of religion. It is but natural then, that those correct and well-bred persons, to whom allusion has been made, who pass on from the cradle to the brink of the grave, treating religion with respect, as a good thing for the poor and the disconsolate, but altogether unnecessary for *them*, should appear, on a slight examination of the subject, to be living in a much more enviable state, than those who believe themselves called upon to renounce the world and its vanities, and devote their time and their talents, their energies and their affections, to a cause which the worldly-minded regard, at best, as visionary and wild.

I have spoken of such persons passing on to the *brink* of the grave, and I have used this expression, because, I believe the grave has terrors, even to them; that when one earthly hold after another gives way, and health declines, and fashionable friends fall off, and death sits beckoning on the tombstones of their newly-buried associates and relatives; I believe there is often a fearful questioning, about the realities of eternal things, and chiefly about the religion, which in idea they had set apart for the poor, the aged, and the disconsolate, but would none of it themselves.

Yes, I believe, if the young could witness the solitude of such persons, could visit their chambers of sickness, and gain admittance to the secret counsels of their souls, they would find there an aching void, a want, a destitution, which the wealth and the fashion, the pomp and the glory of the whole habitable world would be insufficient to supply.

It is often secretly objected by young people, that, by making a profession of religion they should be brought into fellowship and association with vulgar persons: in answer to which argument, it would be easy to show that nothing can be more vulgar than vice, to say nothing of worldly-mindedness. It is, however, more to the purpose to endeavor to convince them, that true religion is so purifying to its own nature, as to be capable of elevating and refining minds which have

ever been either softened or enlightened by any other influence.

All who have been extensively engaged in the practical exercise of Christian benevolence; and who, in promoting the good of their fellow-creatures, have been admitted to scenes of domestic privacy among the illiterate and the poor, will bear their testimony to the fact, that religion is capable of rendering the society of some of the humblest and simplest of human beings, as truly refined, and far more affecting in its pathos and interest, than that of the most intelligent circles in the higher walks of life. I do not, of course, pretend to call it as refined in manners, and phraseology; but in the ideas and the feelings which its conversation is intended to convey. That is not refined society where polished language is used as the medium for low ideas; but that in which the ideas are raised above vulgar and worldly things and assimilated with thoughts and themes on which the holy and the wise, the saint and the philosopher, alike delight to dwell.

It is no exaggeration then to say, that the conversation of the humble Christian on her death-bed—her lowly bed of suffering, surrounded by poverty and destitution—is sometimes so fraught with the intelligence of that celestial world on which her hopes are fixed, that to have spent an hour in her presence, is like having had the glories of heaven, and the wonders of immortality, revealed. And is this a vulgar or degrading employment for a refined and intellectual being? to dwell upon the noblest theme which human intellect has ever grasped, to look onward from the perishable things of time to the full development of the eternal principles of truth and love! to forget the sufferings of frail humanity, and to live by faith among the ransomed spirits of the blest, in the presence of angels, and before the Saviour, ascribing *honor and glory, dominion and power, to Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever?*

In turning back to the world, from the contemplation of such a state of mind, we feel that vulgarity consists neither in religion itself, nor in its requirements, but in attaching

undue importance to the things of time, and in making them our chief, or only good.

If young people are often deterred from becoming religious by seeing a great number of genteel, correct, and agreeable persons, who, for any thing they can discover to the contrary, are doing very well without it, they are still more forcibly deterred by feeling no want of it within themselves.

Perhaps you are so protected by parents, and so hemmed in by domestic regulations, that you feel it more difficult to do what is positively wrong, than what is generally approved as right. But do not be so blind and presumptuous as to mistake this apparently inoffensive state, for being religious; and remember, if it is difficult to do wrong now, it is the last stage of your experience in which you will find it so. Obligated to quit the parental roof, deprived by death of your natural protectors, required as years advance to take a more active part in the duties of life, or to incur a greater share of culpability by their neglect; thrown among strangers, or friends who are no longer watchful or solicitous for your temporal and spiritual good; involved in new connections, and exposed to temptations both from within and from without, how will your mind, lately so careless and secure, awake to a conscious feeling of your own weakness, and a secret terror of impending harm! For woman from her very feebleness is fearful; while from her sensitiveness she is peculiarly exposed to pain. Without religion, then, she is the most pitiable, the most abject, the most utterly destitute of all created beings. The world—society—nay, even domestic life, has nothing to offer on which her heart in its unregenerate state can rest in safety. Each day is a period of peril, if not of absolute agony; for all she has to give—her affections, which constitute her wealth—are involved in speculations, which can yield back into her bosom nothing but ashes and mourning.

It is not so with the woman who has made religion her stronghold—her defence—her stay. Unchecked in the happiest and most congenial impulse of her nature, can she still

love, because the Lord her God has commanded that she should love him with all her heart, and with all her strength, and that she should love her neighbor as herself. Thus, though disappointment or death may blight her earthly hopes; or though a cloud may rest upon the bestowment of her affections in this vale of tears, the principle of love which fills her soul remains the same, and she is most happy when its sphere of exercise is unbounded and eternal.

And is it possible that any of the rational beings whom I am addressing would dare to rush upon the dangers and temptations of this uncertain and precarious life, without the protection and support of religion? Oh! no, they tell me they are all believers in religion—all professors of the Christian faith. But are you all religious? Deceive not yourselves. There is no other way of being Christians, except by being personally religious. If not personally religious now, are you then ready to begin to be so? Delay not; you have arrived at years of discretion, and are capable of judging on many important points. You profess to believe in a religion which expressly teaches you that it is itself the one thing needful. What then stands in the way? If, after mature and candid deliberation, you decidedly prefer the world, injure not the cause of Christ by an empty profession, nor act the cowardly part of wearing the outward badge of a faith which holds not possession of your heart and affections. It is neither honorable nor just to allow any one to doubt on whose side you are. If, therefore, your decision be in favor of religion, it is still more important that you should not blush to own a Saviour, who left the glory of the heavenly kingdom, inhabited a mortal and suffering frame, and finally died an ignominious death, for you.

Nor let the plea of youth retard the offering of your heart to Him who gave you all its capacity for exquisite and intense enjoyment. If you are young, you are happy in having more to offer. Though it constitutes the greatest privilege of the Christian dispensation, that we are not required to bring any

thing by which to purchase the blessings of pardon and salvation; it surely must afford some additional satisfaction to a generous mind, to feel that because but a short period of life has passed away, there is more of health and strength, of elasticity and vigor, to bring into the field of action, than if the decision upon whose side to engage, had been deferred until a later period.

What, for instance, should we think of the subjects of a gracious and beneficent sovereign, who maintained a small territory in the midst of belligerent foes, if none of these subjects would consent to serve in his army for the defence of his kingdom, until they had wasted their strength and their vigor in the enemy's ranks, in fighting deliberately and decidedly against the master, whom yet they professed to consider as their rightful lord; and then, when all was lost, and they were poor, decrepit, destitute, and almost useless, returned to him, for no other reason, but because he was a better paymaster than the enemy, under whose colors they had fought for the whole of their previous lives? What should we say, if we beheld this gracious master willing to receive them on such terms, and not only to receive, but to honor and reward them with the choicest treasures of his kingdom? We should say, that one of the most agonizing thoughts which could haunt the bosom of each of those faithless servants, would be regret and self-reproach, that he had not earlier entered upon the service of his rightful lord.

There is besides, this fearful consideration connected with the indecision of youth, that in religious experience none can remain stationary. Where there is no progress, there must be a falling back. *He who is not with me, is against me*, was the appalling language of our Saviour when on earth; by which those who are halting between two opinions, and those who are imagining themselves safe on neutral ground, are alike condemned, as being opposed to the Redeemer's kingdom. It is but reasonable, however, that the young should understand the principles, and reflect maturely upon the claims of religion, before

decision is openly declared. Much has been done to individuals, as well as society at large, by a precipitate and uncaring readiness to enlist under the banners of 'cross, before the duties of a faithful soldier have been duly considered. It is tendency of ardent youth, to invest what it delights in for the moment, with ideal ties adapted to its taste and fancy. Thus religion often—too often—been decked in ornaments more appropriate to the divinities of Greece and Rome, than to the worship of a suffering and persecuted people, whose example on earth, they have been fully warned, is to be one of luxury or repose.

The first and severest disappointment to which the young enthusiast in religion is subjected is generally that of finding, on a nearer acquaintance with the devout men and honest women who compose the religious societies into which they are admitted, that they have faults and failings like the rest of mankind, and even inconsistencies in their usual walk, which are still more unexpected and more difficult to reconcile. The first lesson of the young, on making this discovery, is often to give up the cause altogether; "for if such," say they, "be the defects of Christian character, after such a season of experience, and while occupying so exalted a position, it can be of little use to us to persevere in the same course." They forget, or perhaps they never have considered, that the greatest attainment of the Christian in this world, is often that of alternate error and repentance; and that it is the state of the heart before God, of which he alone is the judge, and which constitutes the difference between a hypocrite, and an impenitent sinner. Besides this, they know not all. The secret struggles of the heart, the temptations overcome, the tears of repentance, which no human eye can see, must alike be hid from them, as well as the fearful effects upon the peace of mind which these inconsistencies so seriously disorder and destroy.

Wiser application of this humbling lesson, should be, for youth to reflect, that if such be the effects in the character of more experi-

enced Christians, they themselves enjoy the greatest of all privileges, that of profiting by the example of others, so as to avoid stumbling where they have fallen; and instead of petulently turning back from a path which will still remain to be right, though thousands upon thousands should wander from it, they will thus be enabled to steer a steadier course, and to finish it with greater joy.

Another great discouragement to the young, consists in finding their efforts to do good so feeble and unavailing—nay, sometimes almost productive of evil, rather than of good. In their charities, especially, they find their confidence abused, and their intentions misunderstood. On every hand, the coldness of the rich, and the ingratitude of the poor, alike repel their ardor. If they engage in schools, no one appears the better for their instruction; if they connect themselves with benevolent societies, they find their individual efforts so trifling, in comparison with the guilt and the misery which prevail, as scarcely to appear deserving of repetition; while, in the distribution of religious books, and the general attention they give to the spiritual concerns of the ignorant and the destitute, they perceive no fruit of all their zeal, and all their labor.

I freely grant, that these are very natural and reasonable causes of depression, and such as few can altogether withstand; but there is one important secret which would operate as a remedy for such depression, if we could fully realize its supporting and consoling power. The secret is, are we doing all this unto God, or unto man? If unto man, and in our own strength, and solely for the sake of going about doing good; but especially if we have done it for the sake of having been seen and known to have done it; even if we have done it for the sake of the reward which we believe to follow the performance of every laudable act; or with a secret hope of thereby purchasing the favor of God; we have no need to be surprised, or to murmur at such unsatisfactory results, which may possibly have been designed as our wholesome chastisement, or as the means of checking our further progress in folly and presumption.

But, if in every act of duty or kindness we engage in, we are actuated simply by a love to God, and a sense of the vast debt of gratitude we owe for all the unmerited mercies we enjoy, accompanied with a conviction, that whatever the apparent results may be, our debt and our duty are still the same; that whatever the apparent results may be, our heavenly Father has the overruling of them, and is able to make every thing contribute to the promotion of his glory and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, though in ways which we may neither be able to perceive nor understand; then, indeed, with this view of the subject, we are enabled to persevere through every discouragement, rejoicing only in the ability to labor, and leaving the fruit of our labor with him who has appointed both.

I must yet allude to another cause of discouragement with which the young have to contend, and that is, their own spiritual declension, after the ardor of their early zeal has abated. Perhaps I ought rather to say, their imagined declension, because I believe they are often nearer heaven in this humbled, and apparently degraded state, than when exulting in the confidence of untried patience, fortitude, and love. The prevalent idea under this state of mind is, that of their own culpability, in having made a profession of religion in a state of unfitness, or on improper or insufficient grounds, accompanied with an impression that they are undergoing a just punishment for such an act of presumption, and that the only duty which remains for them to do, is to give up the profession of religion altogether.

Perhaps no delusion is greater, or more universal, than to believe, that because we have been wrong in assuming a position, we must, necessarily, throw ourselves out of it in order to be right. This principle would, unquestionably, be just in all situations where any particular qualification was needed, which could not immediately be acquired; but, if the regret be so great on discovering that you are deficient in the evidences of personal religion, surely you can have no hesitation in

choosing to lay hold of the means which are always available for obtaining that divine assistance, which shall render your profession sincere, rather than to give up the duties, the hopes, and the privileges of religion altogether.

It becomes a serious inquiry on these occasions, whether the inclination is not wrong, and whether a plea is not even wished for, as an excuse for turning back, after having laid the hand on the plough. If not, the alternative is a safe, and easy one. Begin afresh. Make a fresh dedication of the heart to God. Commence the work as if it had never been undertaken before, and all may yet be well—perhaps better than if you had never doubted whether you stood upon the right foundation.

It should always be remembered, for the consolation and encouragement of youth, that in making the decision in favor of religion in early life, there is comparatively little to undo; while if this most important duty is left until a later period, there will be the force of long established habit to contend with on the side of wrong, meshes of evil to unravel, dark paths to travel back, and all that mingled texture of light and darkness, which originates in a polluted heart, and a partially enlightened understanding to separate thread from thread. And, oh! what associations, what memories are there! what gleaming forth again of the false fire, even after the true has been kindled! what yawning of the wide sepulchre in which the past is buried, though it cannot rest! what struggling with the demons of imagination, before they are cast out forever! what bleeding of the heart, which, like a chastened child, would kiss the rod, yet dare not think how many stripes would be commensurate with its delinquency! Oh! happy youth! it is thy privilege, that this can never be thy portion!

Yes, happy youth! for thou art ever happy in the contemplation of age; and yet thou hast thy tears. Thou hast thy trials too; and perhaps their acuteness renders them less bearable than the dull burden of accumulated sorrow, which hangs upon maturer years.

Thou hast thy sorrows : and when the mother's eye is closed, that used to watch thy infant steps so fondly ; and the father's hand is that used to rest upon thy head with its benediction and impressive admonition ; whom thou, whom wilt thou ever have, to supply parents' place on earth ? Whom wilt thou ! The world is poor to thee ; for it will ever love thee with a love like theirs. Thou hast thy golden and exuberant youth, thy joyous step, thy rosy smile, and we call thee happy. But thou hast also thy hours of sorrow, thy disappointments, thy chills, thy tears ; when the hopes on which thy young heart has soared begin for the first time to wither ; when the love in which thou hast so long trusted begins to cool ; when the flowers thou hast cherished begin to fade ; when the bird thou hast fed through the winter, in summer flies away ; when the lamb thou hast nursed in thy bosom, prefers the stranger to thee.—Thou hast thy tears ; but the cost of thy sorrows, how soon are they assuaged ! It is this then which constitutes thy greatness, for we all have griefs ; but long as we live, old age, they have worn themselves out, and the scars which cannot be effaced. It is therefore that we look back to youth with envy ; when the tablet of the heart is then fresh, unimpressed, and we long to begin again that fair surface, and to write upon it no characters but those of truth. Will not youth accept the invitation of wisdom, and come before it is too late ?—Come with all its health, and its bloom, its first-fruits untainted, and lay them upon the altar ; an offering which age cannot make ! Let us count the different items of riches which belong to youth, and ask if it is not a holy and a glorious privilege to

dedicate them to the service of the Most High ?

First, then, there is the freshness of unwearied nature, for which so many millions pine in vain ; the glow of health, that life-spring of all the energies of thought and action ; the confidence of unbroken trust—the power to believe, as well as hope—a power which the might of human intellect could never yet restore ; the purity of undivided affection ; the earnestness of zeal unchilled by disappointment ; the first awakening of joy, that has never been depressed ; high aspirations that have never stooped to earth ; the clear perception of a mind unbiassed in its search of truth ; with the fervor of an untroubled soul.

All these, and more than pen could write or tongue could utter, has youth the power to dedicate to the noblest cause which ever yet engaged the attention of an intellectual and immortal being. What, then, I would ask again, is that which hinders the surrender of your heart to God, your conduct to the requirements of the religion of Christ ?

With this solemn inquiry, I would leave the young reader to pursue the train of her own reflections. All that I have proposed to her consideration as desirable in character and habit—in heart and conduct—will be without consistency, and without foundation, unless based upon Christian principle, and supported by Christian faith. All that I have proposed to her as most lovely, and most admirable, may be rendered more, infinitely more so, by the refinement of feeling, the elevation of sentiment, and the purity of purpose, which those principles and that faith are calculated to impart.

DEDICATED BY ESPECIAL PERMISSION TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

THE
WIVES OF ENGLAND,

THEIR
RELATIVE DUTIES,
DOMESTIC INFLUENCE, AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS.

BY MRS. ELLIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND," "THE DAUGHTERS OF ENGLAND,"
"THE POETRY OF LIFE," ETC.

The greatest difficulty of my task has been the laying bare, as it were, before the public eye, the privacy of married life—
a life whose sorrows the heart alone can know, and with whose joys it is the universal privilege of all who share them,
no stranger shall intermeddle.

But if the principles it has been my simple aim to advocate, should meet the approbation of my countrywomen, I would
hope to be associated with their fireside enjoyments, as one whose highest ambition would have been to render their
lives more enduring, their hopes more elevated, and their happiness more secure."—*From the Author's Preface.*

AUTHOR'S EDITION,
COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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1844.

TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN,
IN WHOSE EXALTED STATION
THE SOCIAL VIRTUES OF DOMESTIC LIFE PRESENT THE BRIGHTEST EXAMPLE
TO HER COUNTRYWOMEN,
AND THE SUREST PRESAGE OF HER EMPIRE'S GLORY ;
This Volume is gratefully Inscribed,
BY HER MAJESTY'S
MOST OBEYANT AND MOST DEVOTED SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E .

writing on any subject, and particularly for the purpose of doing good, there are two extremes to be avoided—of being too general, and that of being too minute.

Generalizing too much, the writer runs the risk of being considered by the public as having little actual knowledge of the state of human affairs, and consequently little sympathy either with those who enjoy, or with those who suffer. Without saying any thing to disparage in any respects the value of those excellent lessons on female duty, in many of which are included the duties of married women, inasmuch as they have all appeared to me so general—too much as if the writer had not been personally identified with the subject, had never entered into the intricacies of private and domestic life, or could not feel, what the heart of woman feels, under its peculiar trials.

But, while endeavoring to avoid this extreme, I am quite alive to the suspicion that I may have fallen into the other; that the mere ambition of writing a book has been my object, I should have felt fully that those who read only for amusement might lay aside the volume rather, as trifling, common-place, and

Yet such is my confidence in the power of human sympathy, that I fear not to trust the practical hints which I give in these pages to the kindness of my countrywomen, assuring them that I ask no higher reward, than, that while some of them are reading my homely

details of familiar things, they should feel that in the writer they have found a sister and a friend,—one who is bound to the same heritage with themselves, sharing the same lot, and while struggling under much weakness of resolution, and many disadvantages of heart and character, is subject to the same hopes, and the same fears, both as regards this life and the next.

The greatest difficulty of my task, however, has been to me the laying bare, as it were, before the public eye, the privacy of married life—of that life whose sorrows the heart alone can know, and with whose joys it is the universal privilege of all who share them, that no stranger shall intermeddle. This difficulty, of the extent of which I was not fully aware before commencing the work, has sometimes thrown a hesitancy—I had almost said a delicacy—in the way of writing with the strength which the occasion demanded; and I could not but feel that the subject itself was one better calculated for confidential fireside intercourse, than for a printed volume.

But if then the principles it has been my simple aim to advocate, should meet the approbation of my countrywomen, I would fondly hope to be associated with their fireside enjoyments as one whose highest earthly ambition would have been to render their pleasures more enduring, their hopes more elevated, and their happiness more secure.

ROSE HILL, February 16th, 1843.

THE WIVES OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

THOUGHTS BEFORE MARRIAGE.

Commencing a work addressed particularly to married women, it might appear a little out of place to devote a whole chapter to the subject of "thoughts before marriage," but the writer supposes it probable, that if married women should deem the following worthy of their notice, those who are to assume the responsibility of wives, will feel equally curious to ascertain the contents. In this chapter, the writer would venture to recommend a few cautions to those who have not yet passed the marriageable epoch, and with whom, therefore, it might be too late to retract, if they should have not correctly calculated the consequences of the step they are about to take, or, what is still more probable, if they have not coolly and impartially estimated their own capability for rendering it one of pleasure and safety both to themselves and to their families.

On the other hand, the inquiries I propose, are such as, where the mind is not properly prepared for this important change, will tend to confirm the best feelings; while they will assist in detecting every latent evil which might otherwise wait, to rise up after the season of deception is past, like clouds in the horizon, gradually spread their gloom across the sky, and finally obscure the sunshine of the future day.

The great object to be aimed at by all who are about to enter upon the married state, is to examine calmly and dispassionately the elements of this state; to put away all

personal feeling; and to be not only willing, but determined, to look the subject fairly in the face, and to see its practical bearing upon the interest and the happiness of those with whom they may be associated.

Perhaps there never yet was a woman of warm feelings, or man either, who had not, in early life, some vision of conjugal felicity, which after experience and knowledge of the world have failed to stamp with the impress of reality. Some, believing themselves capable of contributing their share to this measure of earthly happiness, and disappointed in not finding an equal companion, have wisely declined entering upon the married state altogether; while others, more confident of success, have made the experiment for themselves, believing, that though all the world may have failed in realizing their dreams of bliss, they and theirs will be fortunate enough to exhibit to the wonder of mankind, an instance of perfect connubial happiness.

It is needless to decide which of these two parties deserve the highest meed of commendation for their prudence and common sense. But it is equally needless to belong to either class of individuals. "What!" exclaims the young enthusiast, "shall we not even *hope* to be happy?" Yes. Let us hope as long as we can; but let it be in subservience to reason and to truth. Let us hope only to be happy ourselves, so long as we make others happy too; and let us expect no measure of felicity beyond what this world has afforded to those who were wiser and better than we are.

"But why then," exclaims the same enthusiast, "all the fine talk we hear about

marriage? and why, in all the stories we read, is marriage made the end of woman's existence?" Ah! there lies the evil. Marriage, like death, is too often looked upon as the *end*; whereas both are but the beginning of states of existence infinitely more important than that by which they were preceded; yet each taking from that their tone and character, and each proportioned in their enjoyment to the previous preparation which has been made for their happiness or misery.

The education of young ladies is too frequently such as to lead them naturally to suppose, that all the training, and all the discipline they undergo, has reference only to this *end*. The first evidence that marriage is thus regarded by many young women, is seen in a petulant rebellion against the restraints of home, and the requirements of parental authority, accompanied by a threat, not always distinctly uttered, that the first opportunity of escaping from domestic thralldom shall not be neglected. This species of rebellion against rightful authority, is much cherished by school-companions and sisters; while the gossip of servants, to whom the indignant sufferers sometimes appeal, and the general tenor of what is called light reading, tend to keep up the same kind of spirited determination to rush upon the uncertainties of marriage, in the hope of escaping from the certainties of home. A polite and flattering lover next presents himself. The persecuted or neglected damsel finds at last that her merits are appreciated, and while the gates of an imaginary Eden are still open, she enters eagerly among its fruits and flowers, never stopping to inquire if

"The trail of the serpent is over them still."

Such is the natural history of one half at least of those early marriages, which fix the doom of women for this world, and sometimes for the next. What wonder, then, that a sincere and earnest friend, and an affectionate well-wisher of her sex, should deem it necessary, even on the near approach of that day which is generally spoken of as making two human beings happy, to request

the weaker, and consequently the more easily deluded party, to pause and think again.

Although I am one of the last persons who could wish to introduce in any plausible form, to an upright and honorable mind, the bare idea of the possibility of breaking an engagement; yet as there are cases in which an engagement of marriage, if literally kept, must necessarily be violated in spirit, I cannot help thinking, that of two evils, it is, in this case, especially desirable to choose the least; and to prefer inflicting a temporary pain, and enduring an inevitable disgrace, to being the means of destroying the happiness of a lifetime, with the self-imposed accompaniment of endless remorse.

In the first place, then, I would ask, are you about to bring to the altar, and to offer, in the sight of God, a faithful and devoted heart? To answer with a mere expression of belief, is not sufficient here. There must be certainty on this point, if not on any other. There are many tests by which this important fact may be ascertained, and of these I shall particularize a few. The first is, whom are you loving?—the man who stands before you with all his "imperfections on his head"—his faults of temper, follies, inconsistencies, and past misdeeds? Is this the man you love? or is it some ideal and perfect being whom you will fail to recognise in the husband of your after life? If the latter case be yours, go back, and wait, for your acquaintance has yet to be formed on the only sure basis—that of honesty and truth; and you might as safely unite yourself with a being you had never seen before, as with one whom you had seen without having known or understood.

The discovery that you have mistaken the real character of your lover, need not, however, be any barrier to the ultimate fulfilment of your engagement with him. All that you have to do, is to wait until you have studied his real character, and ascertained that you can still love him, though you no longer believe him to be without a fault.

During the progress of this study, the delay it will necessarily occasion, may be made

to answer two valuable ends ; for at the same time that you have been deceived, it is more than probable that you have been deceiving. Not intentionally, perhaps, yet the effect may be as calamitous as if you had designedly practised upon the partial credulity of your lover. It is of the utmost importance, then, that you inquire into the nature of your own conduct, not only towards him, but towards others in his presence. Have you, during the season of courtship, been acting a part which you never before sustained, or which you do not intend to sustain as a wife ? Have you been more amiable to your admirer, than you expect to be to your husband ? If you have, there are two ways of remedying this evil, for an evil it certainly is ; and one of these you are bound in common honesty to adopt : you must either defer your marriage until your real character has been brought to light, and clearly understood ; or, you must determine, from this time forward, by the Divine blessing on your endeavors, that you will be in reality the amiable being you have appeared.

And now, having learned to see your lover as he is, I would ask again, whether you are quite sure that your affections are entirely and irrevocably his. If on this point there is doubt, there must be danger ; but still there are tests to be applied, which may in some measure reduce those doubts to certainty. The most important question, in a case of doubt, is, whether your heart lingers after any other object ; and this may be best ascertained by asking yourself still further, whether there is any other man in the world, of whom it would give you pain to hear that he was likely to be married. If there is not, you are in all probability safe in this respect, and yet you may not love the man you are about to marry, as he hopes, deserves, and believes himself to be loved. I would ask, then, are you weary of his presence, and relieved when he goes away ? or are you disposed to exercise less charity and forbearance towards his faults, than towards the faults of others ? for if his failings annoy and irritate you more than those of men in gen-

eral, depend upon it, you do not love him as you ought. If, too, you feel ashamed of him before marriage, there is little probability that you will afterwards evince towards him that respect and reverence which is right and seemly in a wife.

In order to ascertain these points clearly, it is good for every woman before she marries, to see the man of her choice in the company of her friends, and especially to see him associated and compared with those whose opinion she esteems most highly. We are all more or less influenced by the secret sympathies of our common nature. In nothing can we think or feel alone ; and few cases show more plainly the weakness and liability to delusion under which we labor, than the strong confidence we sometimes entertain in the correctness of our own judgment, until some new trial is made ; and then immediately, as if by a kind of instinct, placing ourselves in the situation of others, we see as it were with their eyes, think with their thoughts, and arrive at their conclusions. This tendency of our nature is often discovered in the reading of books, which we have both enjoyed and admired alone ; but no sooner do we read them in company with a critical friend, than we see at once their defects, and can even use against them the same powers of criticism ourselves. Happy is it for those whose judgment, thus influenced, is confined in its exercise to books !—happy for them if they never know what it is to find the talents and the recommendations of a lover disappear in a moment, on the approach of an interesting and influential friend, and disappear in such a way as never to be recalled again !

Yet, having stood this test, it is still possible to doubt, and, without sufficient love, your engagement may still be only just dragged on, because you have no sufficient plea for breaking it off. You may perhaps esteem your lover highly ; you may feel grateful for his kindness, and flattered by his admiration ; you may also feel a strong desire to make him the happy man he believes he can be with you, and you alone—you may feel all this, and yet, I repeat, you may not love him

as a woman ought to love her husband. This will be more clearly proved by an increase of sadness on your part, as the time of your marriage draws near, an indefinite apprehension that with you the pleasures of life are at an end, and a determination, requiring often to be renewed, that at least you will do your duty to one who deserves every thing from you.

Let me, however, ask what this duty is? It is not merely to serve him; a hired menial could do that. The duty of a wife is what no woman ever yet was able to render without affection; and it is therefore the height of presumption to think that you can coldly fulfil a duty, the very spirit of which is that of love itself.

It is possible, however, that you may still be mistaken. It is possible that the gradual opening of your eyes from the visions of girlish romance, which are apt to flit before the imaginative and inexperienced, may have given you a distaste both for your companion, and your future lot. If this be the case, the difficulty will be easily overcome by the exercise of a little good feeling and common sense. But in order to prove that this is really all, put this question to yourself—if you were quite sure there was some other woman as amiable, or more so, than you, with whom your friend could be equally happy, would you feel pleasure in his cultivating her acquaintance instead of yours?

If you can answer this question in the negative, you may yet be safe; if not, the case is too decided to admit of a moment's hesitation. Your own integrity, and a sense of justice towards your friend, equally dictate the propriety of making him acquainted with the painful, the humiliating fact, that you do not love him; and no man, after being convinced of this, could desire the fulfilment of a mere nominal engagement.

I am aware that the opinion of the world and the general voice of society are against such conduct, even where love is wanting; and I am equally aware, that no woman ought to venture upon breaking an engagement on such grounds, without feeling her-

self humbled to the very dust; but I am not the less convinced, that it is the only safe, the only just line of conduct which remains to her who finds herself thus circumstanced, and that it is in reality more generous to her lover, than if she kept "the word of promise to his ear, and broke it to his hope."

But there may be other causes besides this, why an engagement should not be fulfilled. There may be a want of love on the part of your friend, or there may be instances of unfaithfulness too glaring to be overlooked; and here let it be observed, that woman's love may grow after marriage—man's, never. If, therefore, he is indifferent or unfaithful as a lover, what must be expected of him as a husband?

It is one of the greatest misfortunes to which women are liable, that they cannot, consistently with female delicacy, cultivate, before an engagement is made, an acquaintance sufficiently intimate to lead to the discovery of certain facts which would at once decide the point, whether it was prudent to proceed further towards taking that step, which is universally acknowledged to be the most important in a woman's life.

One of these facts, which can only be ascertained on a close acquaintance, is the tendency there is in some individuals to overawe, and keep others at a distance. Now, if on the near approach of marriage, a woman finds this tendency in the companion she has chosen, if she cannot open to him her whole heart, or if he does not open his heart to her, but maintains a distant kind of authoritative manner, which shuts her out from sympathy and equality with himself, it is time for her to pause, and think seriously before she binds herself for life to that *worst of all slavery*, the fear of a husband. I have no scruple in using this expression, because where the connection is so intimate, and the sphere of action necessarily so confined, if fear usurps the place of confidence and love, it must naturally engender a servile disposition to deceive, either by falsehood or evasion, wherever blame would attach to a full disclosure of the truth.

I have already said that it is a prudent plan for the woman who intends to marry, to try the merits of her lover, or rather her own estimate of them, by allowing him an opportunity of associating with her friends. Such precautionary measures, however, are not easily carried out, except at some sacrifice of delicate and generous feeling; and, generally speaking, the less a woman allows her name to be associated with that of her husband before marriage, the better. It is sometimes argued that an engagement entered into with right feelings, is of so binding and sacred a nature, that persons thus related to each other, may be seen together, both in public and private, almost as if they were really married; and to such it may appear a cold kind of caution still to say "beware!" Yet such is the uncertain nature of all human affairs, that we need not look far for instances of the most improbable changes taking place, after all possibility of change had been banished from our thoughts. Within a month, a week, nay, even a day, of marriage, there have been discoveries made which have fully justified an entire disunion of the parties thus associated; and then how much better has it been, where their names had not been previously united, and where their appearance together had not impressed the idea of indissoluble connection upon the minds of others!

One of the most justifiable, and at the same time one of the most melancholy causes for such disunion, is the discovery of symptoms of insanity. Even a highly excited and disordered state of the nervous system, will operate with a prudent woman against an alliance of this nature. Yet here again, it is particularly unfortunate, that in cases of nervous derangement, the discovery is seldom fully made except in the progress of that close intimacy which immediately precedes marriage, and which consequently assumes the character of an indissoluble engagement. Symptoms of this nature, however, when exhibited in the conduct of a man, are of the most serious and alarming character. A woman laboring under such maladies, in their milder form, may be so influenced by authori-

ty as to be kept from doing any very extensive harm; but when a man, with the reins of government in his hand, loses the power to guide them, when his mind becomes the victim of morbid feeling, and his energies sink under imaginary burdens, there is no calculating the extent of calamity which may result to the woman who would be rash enough to link her destiny with his.

Another justifiable reason for setting aside an engagement of marriage, or protracting the fulfilment of it, is a failure of health, especially when either this, or the kind of malady already noticed, induces an incapacity for business, and for the duties which generally devolve upon the master of a household. It is true, that in cases where the individual thus afflicted does not himself see the propriety of withdrawing from the engagement, the hard, and apparently selfish part a woman has to act on these occasions is such as, in addition to her own sufferings, will probably bring upon her the blame of many who do not, and who cannot, understand the case; and the more delicate her feelings are towards the friend she is thus compelled to treat with apparent harshness, the less likely she will be to exculpate herself by an exposure to the world of his inconsistency, or his weakness. Thus, as in many of the acts of woman's life, she has to be the sufferer every way; but still that suffering is less to every one concerned, than if she plunged herself into all the lamentable consequences of a union with a man who wanted either the mental or the physical capacity to keep her and hers from poverty and distress. In the former case, she will have the dictates of prudence and of conscience in her favor. In both, the world will be lavish of its blame; but in the latter only, could her portion be that of self-condemnation, added to irremediable misery.

After all these considerations have been duly weighed, and every test of truth and constancy applied to your affection for the object of your choice, there may yet remain considerations of infinite moment as they relate to your own fitness for entering upon the married state.

In the first place, what is it you are expecting?—to be always flattered? Depend upon it, if your faults were never brought to light before, they will be so now. Are you expecting to be always indulged? Depend upon it, if your temper was never tried before, it will be so now. Are you expecting to be always admired? Depend upon it, if you were never humble and insignificant before, you will have to be so now. Yes, you had better make up your mind at once to be uninteresting as long as you live, to all except the companion of your home; and well will it be for you, if you can always be interesting to him. You had better settle it in your calculations, that you will have to be crossed oftener than the day; and the part of wisdom will dictate, that if you persist in your determination to be married, you shall not only be satisfied, but cheerful to have these things so.

One important truth sufficiently impressed upon your mind will materially assist in this desirable consummation—it is the superiority of your husband, simply as a man. It is quite possible you may have more talent, with higher attainments, and you may also have been generally more admired; but this has nothing whatever to do with your position as a woman, which is, and must be, inferior to his as a man. For want of a satisfactory settlement of this point before marriage, how many disputes and misunderstandings have ensued, filling, as with the elements of discord and strife, that world of existence which ought to be a smiling Eden of perpetual flowers—not of flowers which never fade; but of flowers which, if they must die, neither droop nor wither from the canker in their own bosoms, or the worm which lies at their own roots.

It is a favorite argument with untried youth, that all things will come right in the end, where there is a sufficiency of love; but is it enough for the subjection of a woman's will, that she should love her husband? Alas! observation and experience alike convince us, that love has been well represented as a wayward boy; and the alternate ex-

hibitions of contradiction and fondness which are dictated by affection alone, though interesting enough before the nuptial knot is tied, are certainly not those features in the aspect of his domestic affairs, whose combination a prudent man would most desire.

It is to sound judgment then, and right principle, that we must look, with the blessing of the Bestower of these good gifts, for ability to make a husband happy—sound judgment to discern what is the place designed for him and for us, in the arrangements of an all-wise Providence—and right principle to bring down every selfish desire, and every rebellious thought, to a due subserviency in the general estimate we form of individual duty.

But supposing this point satisfactorily settled, and an earnest and prayerful determination entered into to be but a secondary being in the great business of conducting the general affairs of social life, there are a few things yet to be thought of, a few duties yet to be discharged, before the final step can properly be taken. In the warmth and enthusiasm of youthful feeling, few women look much beyond themselves in the calculations they make upon their married future. To be loved, and cherished, is all they appear solicitous to stipulate for, forgetting the many wants and wishes that will necessarily arise out of the connection they are about to form. It may not be out of place then to remind them, how essential it is to comfort in the married state, that there should have been beforehand a clear understanding, and a strict agreement, with regard both to the general style of living, and the friendships and associations to be afterwards maintained. All secret wishes and intentions on these subjects, concealed by one party from the fear of their being displeasing to the other, are ominous of future disaster; and, indeed, I would almost venture so far as to advise, that unless such preliminaries can be satisfactorily adjusted, the parties had better make up their minds to separate; for these causes of difference will be of such frequent occurrence, as to leave little prospect of domestic peace.

If, however, the companion of your future home should not be disposed to candor on these points, you will probably have opportunities of judging for yourself; and such means of forming your conclusions ought on no account to be neglected. You will probably, for instance, have opportunities of ascertaining whether he is one of those who place their chief happiness in what is called good living, or, in other words, in the pleasures of the table; and if in his estimation wine forms a prominent part of these enjoyments, let not the fear of the world's censure operate for one moment against your separating yourself from such a man. If this should seem a harsh and hasty conclusion, remember that the evils of a gross and self-indulgent habit are such as generally increase with the advance of years, and, as the natural spirits fail, and health becomes impaired, are liable to give rise to the most fatal maladies both of mind and body. If, then, there is danger and disgust to apprehend on the side of indulgence, it is on the other hand a hard and unthankful duty for the wife to be perpetually restraining the appetite of her husband, and preaching up the advantages of abstinence to the man she loves. Nor is it improbable, or of rare occurrence, that under such circumstances she should actually lose his affection, for men like not the constant imposition of restraint upon their wishes; and so much happier—so much more privileged is the situation of her who can safely minister to the desires of her husband, that I would recommend to every woman to choose the man who can with propriety be indulged, rather than him whose habits of self-gratification already require restraint.

As the time of your marriage draws near, you will naturally be led with ease and pleasure into that kind of unlimited confidence with the companion of your future lot, which forms in reality the great charm of married life. But even here a caution is required, for though all the future, as connected with your own experience, must belong to him, all the past must belong to others. Never, therefore, make it the subject of your confi-

dential intercourse to relate the history of your former love affairs, if you have had any. It is bad taste to allude to them at all, but especially so under such circumstances; and although such details might serve to amuse for the moment, they would in all probability be remembered against you at some future time, when each day will be sufficiently darkened by its own passing clouds.

With regard to all your other love affairs then, let "by-gones be by-gones." It could do no good whatever for you to remember them; and the more you are dissociated from every other being of his own sex, the more will the mind of your husband dwell upon you with unalloyed satisfaction. On the other hand, let no ill-advised curiosity induce you to pry too narrowly into his past life as regards affairs of this nature. However close your inquiries, they may still be baffled by evasion; and if it be an important point with you, as many women profess to make it, to occupy an unsullied page in the affections of your husband, it is wiser and safer to take for granted this flattering fact, than to ask whether any other name has been written on that page before. In this case, as well as your own, both honor and delicacy would suggest the propriety of drawing a veil over the past. It is sufficient for the happiness of married life that you share together the present and the future.

With such a field for the interchange of mutual thought, there can surely be no want of interest in your conversation, for the arrangements to be made are so new to both, and consequently so fraught with importance, that parties thus circumstanced, are proverbially good company only to each other.

Amongst these arrangements, if the choice of a residence be permitted you, and especially if your own temper is not good, or your manners not conciliating, avoid, as far as you can do so with prudence, and without thwarting your husband's wishes, any very close contact with his nearest relatives. There are not wanting numerous instances in which the greatest intimacy and most fa-

miliar associations of this kind have been kept up with mutual benefit and satisfaction ; but generally speaking it is a risk, and you may not yourself be sufficiently amiable to bear, with a meek and quiet spirit, the general oversight, and well-meant interference, which mothers and sisters naturally expect to maintain in the household of a son and a brother. These considerations, however, must of course give way to the wishes of the husband and his family, as it is of the utmost importance not to offend his relatives in the outset by any appearance of contradiction or self-will ; and besides which, he and his friends will be better judges than you can be, of the general reasons for fixing your future residence.

And now, as the time draws near, are you quite sure that your means are sufficient to enable you to begin the world with independence and respectability ? Perhaps you are not a judge, and if not, you have no right to think of becoming a wife ; for young men in general have little opportunity of making themselves acquainted with household economy ; and who then is to make those innumerable calculations upon which will depend, not only the right government of your establishment, but also your peace of mind, your integrity of character, and your influence for time and for eternity ?

Oh ! what a happy day would that be for Britain, whose morning should smile upon the making of a law for allowing no woman to marry until she had become an economist, thoroughly acquainted with the necessary expenses of a respectable mode of living, and able to calculate the requirements of comfort, in connection with all the probable contingencies of actual life. If such a law should be so cruel as to suspend for a year or more every approach to the hymeneal altar, it would, at least, be equally effectual in averting that bitter repentance with which so many look back to the hurried and thoughtless manner in which they rushed blindfold upon an untried fate, and only opened their eyes to behold their madness and folly, when it was too late to avert the fatal consequences.

As a proof how little young men in general are acquainted with these matters, I have heard many who fully calculated upon living in a genteel and comfortable style, declare that a hundred pounds was sufficient for the furnishing of a house. Thus a hundred pounds on one side, either saved, borrowed, or begged, and fifty on the other, are not unfrequently deemed an ample provision, with a salary of two hundred, to begin the world with. It is true the young man finds that salary barely sufficient for himself ; but then, he hears and reads how much is saved under *good* female management, and he doubts not but his deficiencies will be more than made up by his wife. It is true the young lady, with her ill health, and music lessons, and change of air, costs her father at least fifty pounds per annum, but she does not see how she shall cost her husband any thing at all ! Sweet soul ! She needs so little, and really would be content with any thing in the world, so that she might but live with him. Nay, she who has never learned to wait upon herself, would almost do without a servant, so self-denying, so devoted is her love.

Thus the two hopeful parties reason, and should a parent or a friend advise delay, the simple fact of their having been engaged, having expected to be married, and having made up their minds, appear to furnish sufficient arguments why they should proceed in their career of rashness and of folly. Parents who are kindly disposed, will hardly see their children rush upon absolute want at the commencement of their married life. The mother therefore pleads, the father calculates, and by deferring some of his own payments, or by borrowing from a friend, he is enabled to spare a little more than was at first promised, though only as a loan.

And how is this small additional sum too frequently appropriated ? To the purchase of luxuries which the parents of the newly married pair waited ten or twenty years before they thought of indulging themselves with ; and those who have tried every expedient, and drained every creditable source, to gratify the wishes of their imprudent chil-

dren, have to contemplate the heart-sicken-
ing spectacle of beholding them begin the
world in a style superior to that which their
own industry and exertion, persevered in
through half a lifetime, has alone enabled
them to attain.

Now, though the delicate young lady may
think she has little to do with these things,
the honest-hearted Englishwoman, especially
the practical Christian, will find that it be-
longs peculiarly to her province to see that
just and right principles are made the foun-
dation of her character as the mistress of a
house ; and in order to carry out these prin-
ciples so as to make them effectual in their
operation upon her fellow-beings, and accept-
able in the sight of God, she must begin in
time, and while the choice remains to her, to
practise self-denial, even in that act which is
most intimately connected with her present
and future happiness.

If the attention to economy, and the right
feeling with regard to integrity, which I have
so earnestly recommended in the "Women,"
and the "Daughters of England," have been
studied in early youth, she will need no cau-
tion on the subject of delaying her marriage
until prudence shall point out the proper time
for her settlement in life. She will know a
holier, deeper kind of love than that which
would plunge the object of it in irremediable
difficulties for her sake ; and though he may
be inexperienced and imprudent, she will feel
it a sacred trust, to have committed to her
the care of his character and circumstances
in these important and momentous concerns.

Serious and right views on subjects of
this nature, are so intimately connected with
the reality of the Christian character, that it
is difficult to imagine how a high profession
of religion can exist in connection with the
kind of wilful and selfish imprudence above
described. One thing, however, is certain,
that let a woman's religious profession be
what it may, if she be rash and inconsiderate
on the subject of marriage, consulting only
her own gratification, and mistaking mere
fondness for deep and enduring affection, she
has need to go back to the school of mental

discipline, in which she is yet but a novice ;
and instead of taking upon herself the honor-
able title of wife, to set in humility and self-
abasement in the lowest seat, seeking those
essential endowments of mind and of heart,
without which, the blessing of her heavenly
Father must be expected in vain.

Above all other considerations then, as the
bridal day draws near, this thought will sug-
gest itself to the serious and enlightened
mind—What am I seeking in the great
change I am about to make? Am I seek-
ing an escape from duty to enjoyment, from
restraint to indulgence, from wholesome dis-
cipline to perfect ease?

Let us hope that these questions may be
answered satisfactorily, and that the young
woman now about to take upon herself the
charge of new duties, has thoroughly weigh-
ed the responsibility these duties will bring
along with them ; and that in an humble
and prayerful spirit she is inquiring, in what
way she may conduct herself, so that all the
members of her household shall be united
as a Christian family, strengthening and en-
couraging each other in the service of the
Lord.

In so important an undertaking, it cannot
be deemed presumptuous to determine, with
the Divine blessing, to begin with a high
standard of moral excellence. Whatever
our standard is, we never rise above it ;
and so great are the miscalculations usually
made in a prospective view of married life,
that one half at least of its trials, tempta-
tions, and hindrances to spiritual advance-
ment are entirely overlooked. Besides which,
so much of the moral and religious charac-
ter of a household depends upon the female
who controls its domestic regulations, that
the woman who should rush heedlessly into
this situation, expecting to find it easier to
act conscientiously than she had ever done
before, would most likely be punished for
her presumption by discovering, when it was
too late, that instead of religious helps on
every hand, she was in reality plunged into
new difficulties, and placed in the midst of
hindrances to her spiritual improvement,

greater and more appalling than it had ever entered into her imagination to conceive.

But still there is no need to be cast down even while suffering under the natural consequences of this fearful mistake, for He who has said *commit thy way unto the Lord*, will assuredly be near in the time of trouble, when the child of sorrow, sincerely repenting of her blindness and her folly, shall meekly and fervently implore his promised aid. She will then have learned to feel, that let her confidence in the companion of her choice be what it may; let him be to her as the father she has forsaken, the brothers she has left, and the friends whose sweet fellowship she will never more enjoy; there will still be trials in her lot, in which he cannot participate, and depths in her soul which he cannot fathom. He may take her to his bosom as the shepherd takes the lamb; but the green pastures and the refreshing dew will not be his to give. He may guard her safety as the soldier guards the camp; but her enemies may be too subtle for his eye, and too powerful for his arm. He may be to her as the morning to the opening flower; but the sun which gives that morning all its light, will be high in the heavens, and if he shines not, there will be no real brightness in her day. And all this insufficiency may still be felt without a shadow being cast upon her earthly love. Indeed, we never err more fatally, or do greater injustice to the nature and attributes both of religion and of love, than when we blend them together, and expect from one what the other only can bestow. If love sometimes assists us by rendering certain portions of the path of duty more alluring, in how many instances does it throw all its allurements on the opposite side; and in such cases, how hard it is that religion should be charged with the sad consequences which are liable to follow!

I speak not here of love as what it might be, but as what it is. I speak not of that holy and seraphic ardor, which a guardian angel might be supposed to feel for the welfare of the being whose earthly course it watched with unceasing care; nor yet of that pure

sentiment, scarcely less earthly in its tendency, the chastened and subordinate attachment of a redeemed and regenerated soul; I speak of love as a fitful and capricious passion, asserting unreasonable mastery over the human mind, rejecting all control, mixing itself with all motives, assuming all forms so as to work out its own purposes, and never failing to promise an earthly paradise to its blind followers.

It is of such love, I repeat, that it must be kept apart from that great work which religion has to do alone, because the strivings of the spirit in its religious exercises can only be fully known and appreciated by Him who was in all points tempted as we are; and because these groanings, which cannot be uttered to any human ear, are mercifully listened to by Him who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

It is highly important, therefore, that the woman who ventures to become a wife, should not be leaning upon the frail reed of human love for her support. Indeed, it is more than probable that her husband will himself require assistance; and, excellent as he may have hitherto appeared to herself and others, it is equally probable that on a nearer inspection there will be found in his religious character defects and inconsistencies, which will present insuperable obstacles in the way of her whose dependance has been solely upon him. If, however, her dependance has been rightly placed upon a higher foundation than that of human excellence or human love, these defects of character will neither hinder nor discourage her. To work out her own salvation with fear and trembling, will be the great object of her life; and while engaged with all her energies in this first duty, she will be more occupied with anxiety to draw others along with her, than with disappointment at their being less perfect than she had imagined them.

As we must all die alone, so must we live in our spiritual experience.

"Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh."

Each in his hidden sphere of joy or wo
Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart;
Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow,
Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart."

Human sympathy may do much to comfort, human advice to guide, and human example to encourage; but whether married or single, whether associated with others, or separate and alone; we must all bear our own burdens, perform our own duties, answer to our own consciences, reap our own rewards, and receive our own sentence at the bar of eternal judgment.

If this be an awful, and in some respects a gloomy thought, in others it is most consoling; for we need in reality but one Friend in our religious experience. All others are liable to fail us in the hour of need, and at best they can do little for us. But with this Friend on our side, no one can hurt or hinder us. Under his protection, whatever wounds we receive from any mortal foe, our immortal nature will remain uninjured. This Friend then is all-sufficient, and, blessed be his holy name, he *ever liveth to make intercession for us*.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST YEAR OF MARRIED LIFE.

ONE great fault which the writer of these pages has already presumed to find with female education, as conducted in the present day, is, that it fails to prepare the character, and to form the habits, for those after duties, which are as rigorously exacted, as if the whole training of youth had been strictly in accordance with the requirements of middle life. The tone of common conversation, and the moral atmosphere of general society, are strongly tinctured with the same fault—a tendency to encourage thoughts and feelings, wholly at variance with the line of conduct pointed out by religion, and even by common sense, as that which is most likely to be conducive to ultimate happiness.

But in no other circumstance of life is this

want of prospective discipline at once so obvious, and so lamentable, as in the whole progress of that system of self-recommendation which men call courtship, and which unquestionably deserves that name, if to win the partial favor of an inexperienced, and perhaps a vain woman, be the only object they have in view. It is true, that the man who wishes to gain the affections of a woman, must first endeavor to render himself agreeable to her; but all I would ask is, that while endeavoring to gain her love, he should at the same time take some pains to make her worthy of his own, by treating her at least with the faithfulness and sincerity of a friend. Nor need he fear that he shall be a loser in the end by this mode of treatment, for how much greater is the flattery of being loved in spite of our faults, than of being supposed to have none!

If men would, then, in common honesty, state what points they object to in the woman they admire, and what they really do require in a wife, they would not only find their influence, during the season of courtship, productive of the most beneficial consequences, but they would themselves escape a world of disappointment afterwards, while they would save the object of their affections all that astonishment, and wounded feeling, which naturally arise out of finding herself convicted of innumerable faults which were never so much as hinted at before.

Instead of the candid and generous treatment here recommended, how often is the progress of courtship no better than a system of fulsome adulation, and consequently of falsehood, carried on exactly as if marriage was indeed the end, instead of the beginning, of their mutual existence. And thus the affair goes on—nay, it becomes even worse, until the near approach of that day which is to make them one; for friends and relatives now take the same tone, and the bride elect is set apart from all domestic discipline, the recipient of flattering attentions, the object of universal interest, and the centre towards which all calculations and all expressions of kindness equally tend.

Persons sometimes *appear* least selfish when their self-love is fully and freely gratified ; because they have then nothing left to require or to complain of. Thus the bride elect always *appears* amiable, because everybody waits upon her, everybody flatters her, and everybody promotes the gratification of her wishes to the utmost of their power. There is now no self-denial, no giving place to others, no privation of the expected means of enjoyment—or, to sum up all in one word, there is no *neglect* to try her selfishness, or put her meekness to the test. How should she be otherwise than amiable ?

In this manner time passes on, self being made daily more and more the object of universal attention, until at last, the bride becomes personally almost an idol, so lavish is the expenditure bestowed upon her now, compared with what it has ever been before ; so attractive, so becoming, is every ornament she wears ; and so lively is the interest, so profound the respect, with which she is treated on that eventful day, which dawns upon her departure from her parents' home.

Far be it from me to attempt to divest that day of its solemn and important character, or to lower the tone of feeling with which it ought to be regarded ; but as a lover of truth, and a somewhat studious observer of the days which follow, I own I should like to see the preparation of a bride consist more of mental discipline than of personal adornment—more of the resources of a well-stored understanding, already thoroughly informed on the subjects of relative position and practical duty ; and with these, the still higher ornament of a chastened spirit, already imbued with a lively consciousness of the deep responsibilities devolving upon a married woman. After such a preparation, there would be no unwelcome truth to reveal, no unexpected reproof to endure. To fall short of the high standard of excellence in almost every act, and not always to be graciously forgiven, would be a matter of calculation, which, with true Christian meekness, she would be prepared to meet ; while to set aside all selfish considerations, and to look

almost exclusively to the happiness of others for her own, would already have become so habitual as to require no new effort to carry out through the intercourse of daily life.

Happy, and wise as well as happy, would that man be, who should make himself content to wait for the dawning of his bridal day, until the woman of his choice should have been thus prepared. But instead of this, man eagerly secures his prize ; and, like the training of a snared bird, that discipline must all come afterwards, which is to end in domestic harmony, or domestic strife.

But let us turn the page, and after welcoming home the happy couple from the wedding tour, let us venture to whisper into the ear of the bride a few sage words, from which, whether properly prepared or not, she may possibly, from the simple fact of her inexperience, be able to gather something for her future good.

If ever, in the course of human life, indecision may be accounted a merit rather than a defect, it is so in the conduct of a young and newly married woman. While every circumstance around her is new and untried, the voice of prudence dictates caution before any important step is taken, either with regard to the formation of intimacies, or the general style and order of living. A warm-hearted, dependent, and affectionate young woman, ardently attached to her husband, will be predisposed to lean upon the kindness of his relatives, and even to enter rashly into the most intimate and familiar intercourse with them. But even this amiable impulse should be checked by the remembrance, that in all such intimacies, it is much more difficult to recede than to advance, and that when familiar intimacy is once established, there is no such thing as drawing back without personal affront. It will happen, too, unless the husband's relatives are something more than human, that among themselves there will not be perfect unanimity of feeling. They will probably be divided into little parties, in which individuals on one side will look with partial or censorious eyes upon the sayings and doings of those on the other. Such partial

views, when they give a tone to general conversation, are very infectious, and a sensitive mind much interested, and keenly alive to impressions from such a quarter, will be but too likely to become suddenly and powerfully biased by the same prejudices which pervade the circle into which the youthful bride is introduced.

Nothing, however, can be more injudicious than for her to take part in these family matters. If possible, she ought to wait and see for herself, before her opinion is formed upon any of the subjects in question. And this, by great care, may be done without any violation of that respectful behavior which she ought to lay down for herself as a rule, in associating with her husband's relatives, and from which she ought never to deviate, let her opinion of their merits and attractions be what it may.

It is sometimes supposed that the maintenance of personal dignity is incompatible with this exercise of respect towards others. But on no subject do young people make greater mistakes, than on that of dignity. True dignity must always be founded upon a right understanding of our own position in society; for the presumption which would assume what properly belongs to another, and what in no way appertains to the individual who makes this lamentable mistake, is as far removed from dignity, as from right feeling and common sense. As a wife, then, a woman may be always dignified, though, simply as a woman, she may at the same time be humble, and as a Christian self-abased. As a wife—as the chosen companion of an honorable and upright man, it is her duty so to regulate her whole conduct, that she shall neither offend others, nor bring offence upon herself; and this is never more effectually done, than by standing aloof from family disputes, and taking no part either in the partialities or the prejudices of those with whom she is associated.

It is perfectly consistent with personal dignity, that a wife should in all respects be the mistress of her own house. If, therefore, the husband's relations have been accustomed to

take part in his domestic concerns, it is highly important that they should do so no longer. Correct-minded persons will need no hint of this kind from the wife herself. Such persons will be sufficiently aware, that the interior of her establishment must be kept sacred to her alone; and that, while the greatest freedom is maintained both in asking and in granting favors, there must be no intrusion on their part into the mysteries of the kitchen, the store-room, or the pantry, without an invitation from the mistress, either expressed or implied.

Should there be wanting in the husband's relatives this peculiar kind of delicacy of feeling, it will be necessary to devise some plan calculated not to offend, by which they may be made to understand that you do not wish them, in your own house, entirely to share all things in common; for let the degree of kindness on both sides be what it may, your education and theirs will in all probability have been so different, that circumstances must necessarily arise, calculated to draw forth remarks which cannot always be acceptable; and it is therefore your wisest plan, to draw the line of demarcation on the side of safety.

Nor is it necessary that in thus asserting your rights, suspicion should be awakened of any want of kindly feeling. To obviate all chance of this, it would be wise to take advantage of the advice of your husband's relatives in all cases where they are willing to give, and where you are prepared to adopt it; and, at the same time, to be careful that an excess of kindness should accompany that uncompromising defence of your own dignity, which every woman has a right to make. No room will then be left for complaint, and you will enjoy the satisfaction of showing your husband how highly you esteem his relatives, and how much you are prepared to serve and to oblige them for his sake.

It is a painful fact, and one of vulgar notoriety, that all eyes are fixed upon a bride, some to see how she is dressed, others to observe how she behaves, and not a few to ascertain, as far as they are able, whether she

has come from a respectable home, or, in other words, whether she has raised herself in worldly circumstances by the connection she has made. This exercise of idle and impertinent curiosity might appear a little too contemptible to be met with any kind of consideration, were it not the interest of a married woman to impress her new relations with an idea of her previous importance, and her unquestionable claims to respect. Even servants are much influenced by this impression, and it was, therefore, a prudent plan adopted by our grandmothers, and still kept up in some parts of England, for the bride to go well appointed to her husband's home, well supplied with a store of good household linen, and with abundance of such clothes as are not likely to become useless by being unfashionable. These things are accustomed to be discussed among servants and dependants. From one little circle of kitchen or laundry gossip, they extend to another; and well if they do not find their way through the same channel to the parlor fireside; well, if the humiliating remark is never made there, that the bride left every thing of importance to be purchased with her husband's money.

Although it may seem rather an ungracious sort of warning, thus to prepare the young bride for a kind of critical inspection scarcely consistent with kind and generous feeling, it is nevertheless necessary in such a world as ours, to calculate upon much which the external aspect of society would scarcely lead us to expect. Yet we must not for this reason forget the many instances in which the most sincere and cordial kindness is called forth on the part of the husband's relatives, when they welcome to her new home one who is literally received into the bosom of their family, and cherished as a lamb of their own fold.

In the majority of cases, too, it happens that the bride is no stranger, that her family and her husband's have been in habits of intimacy, and that the admission of this new link is but the strengthening of that intimacy into more enduring and affectionate union on

both sides. In both these cases, the bride has much to console and to support her in the duties she has undertaken; and a young heart can scarcely fail to feel impressed with gratitude for this voluntary offering of a new and lasting home, with all its kindred associations of parents, brothers, sisters, and friends.

If, on the one hand, it is not only lawful but expedient to endeavor to maintain that dignity which properly belongs to a married woman; on the other, it is necessary to act with the most scrupulous regard to that minute and delicate line, beyond which dignity degenerates into a mere assumption of importance. It is unquestionably an honorable distinction to be the chosen companion of an enlightened and good man; but we must not forget, that nature never yet formed any woman too destitute of attractions, or sent her forth into the world too meanly endowed, for her to be chosen as a wife. The dignity derived from marriage can, therefore, only be a reflected one; and has nothing whatever to do with the merits or the capabilities of the married woman.

I once heard a newly married lady complaining in company with great vehemence of something which had been said to her by a single sister, and concluding many of her sentences with this remark—"All that Miss B— said was, I dare say, sensible enough; but *I, you know, am married*"—as if that alone had been sufficient to give weight to the scale in which good sense, and almost every other good quality, appeared to be wanting.

In no part of the conduct of the bride will keen eyes be more scrutinizing than here. The husband's relatives especially will be ready to detect the least assumption of superiority to themselves. If, therefore, there has been any difference of rank or station in favor of the bride, she will act most wisely as regards herself, and most generously as regards her husband, by keeping every sign or evidence of her having filled a more exalted station entirely out of sight.

All her eccentricities, too, must share the

same fate, at least, until her new relations shall have learned to love her well enough to tolerate them for her sake. At first there will be no such charitable feeling extended towards those peculiarities of character with which they cannot sympathize, perhaps because they cannot understand them. She must now be judged of by a new rule. Singularities of manner, scarcely perceived at home, or kindly borne with as a necessary part of individuality, will now appear not only glaring, but inconsistent and absurd. Faults of temper, too long, and perhaps too leniently indulged, will now be met with opposition, and have the necessity of their existence called in question; while all those little playful sallies of local wit or humor, which were wont to fill up the blanks of social life, may possibly be heard without a smile, or wondered at as unmeaning, and in bad taste.

It is unquestionably the best policy then for a bride to be in all things the opposite of egocentric. Her character, if she have any, will develop itself in time; and nothing can be gained, though much may be lost, by exhibiting its peculiarities before they are likely to be candidly judged or rightly understood. In being unobtrusive, quiet, impartially polite to all, and willing to bend to circumstances, consists the great virtue of a bride; and though to sink, even for a short time, into an apparent nonentity, may be a little humbling to one who has occupied a distinguished place amongst her former friends, the prudent woman will be abundantly repaid, by being thus enabled to make her own observations upon the society and the circumstances around her, to see what pleasant paths she may with safety pursue, or what opportunities are likely to open for a fuller development of her powers, either natural or acquired.

With regard to the duties of charity, and indeed of kindness in general, the cordial reception a bride usually meets with, the interest she has so recently excited, and the favorable aspect worn by every thing around her, naturally inspire in her mind so much that is agreeable in return, and awaken on

her part so many feelings of kindness and good-will, that she becomes more than usually anxious to manifest her benevolence, even towards persons, who, under less favorable circumstances, would have excited no interest whatever.

Those who make it their business to check such feelings, have a hard and ungrateful duty to perform; and yet, where the foundation of such acts of benevolence as are thus performed, is feeling only, the danger is, that a system of behavior will be rashly adopted, which the emotions of after life will not be sufficiently powerful consistently to maintain; and the consequences of such falling off will necessarily be, that the sorrowful or the indigent will have to endure a degree of disappointment or neglect, for which they were but little prepared.

There can be neither injustice nor unkindness in not listening, in the first instance, to claims which you are not able to satisfy; but there is cruelty—absolute cruelty, in withdrawing your attention and interest from persons who have learned to look to you for sympathy and cordial feeling, and in refusing your assistance to those who have learned to look to you for support. As each person can only satisfy a certain number of claims, it follows as a necessary consequence, that by engaging at once in too many, some, or perhaps all, must in the end be suffered to fall into neglect.

The first year of married life may justly be regarded as not likely to present one half of the claims upon individual or household charity which will follow in the second and the third; would it not, therefore, be wise to lay by against a future day, a little fund or store for this purpose? and by always keeping something in hand to be appropriated to charitable uses alone, there can be no surprise when the payment of a bill is due, to find that part of the amount has already been given to relieve a family in distress, and that the payment of the whole must therefore be deferred. All such miscalculations, and falling short of funds as these, cannot be too scrupulously guarded against; for not only is

their influence bad, as they operate against the prompt discharge of pecuniary debts, but their tendency is equally to be feared, as they often warp the mind from its benevolent and kindly purposes, by a frequent repetition of regret that sums have been thoughtlessly expended in charity, which ought to have been otherwise employed.

And here I would observe, that the less we are induced by circumstances to grudge our past charities, or regret our past kindness, the better it is for our own hearts, and for the general tone and temper of our minds. Indeed, where acts of charity are performed with right motives, not for the applause of men, or even for the satisfaction of having done a good deed, or brought about a good end; but simply from a love to God, and in obedience to his commands, there can be no such thing as looking back with regret to the act itself, whatever its consequences may be. He who has commanded us to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, has not given us more than human penetration to judge of the exact amount of their necessities, or their deserts. If, therefore, we have erred, it has only been in the proportion, or the application, of our bestowments. The act of giving remains as much a duty as ever, and to her who has learned to look upon the good things of this life as only lent to her for a brief season of trial, this sacred duty will be found connected with the highest enjoyments of which, in our present state of existence, we are capable.

But in order to enjoy the luxury of giving with the greatest zest, it is highly important that we attend to the strict rules of economy. I have already written much, and would that others would write more, and better, on this subject; for until we can separate in the minds of young women their favorite idea of lavish expenditure, from that of generosity, there is little good to be expected from the Wives of England, and little happiness to be looked for in their far-famed homes. Would that philanthropists of every description then, would give their attention to this subject in detail, and lay it before the public

in a manner that would render it intelligible to the female part of the community; while, communicated through them, it would find its way to every house and every cottage in our land—not that economy which would lead to a useless hoarding up of money, but to the glorious object of effecting the greatest possible amount of good with the smallest means.

Until this most refined and delicate art is made systematically a part of female education, we must look to that stern teacher experience, to show us, late in life, what might have been accomplished by a combination of economy with kindness, had we but begun the study of this delightful art in time. We must look to the items that have been absolutely wasted, in almost every thing we have had to do, for want of being acquainted with a better mode of doing it; and, adding these together, we must look to the helpless and the destitute, and see what an amount of suffering might have been relieved by our economy, if through a long lifetime we had turned every thing committed to our care, or granted for our use, to the best possible account. But we must look beyond this. Yes, we must look with blushing and confusion of face to that want of moral rectitude which rendered us worse than ignorant of the mischief we were doing—to that culpable and degrading apathy—that recklessness of all responsibility with which we conducted our domestic and personal affairs, regardless of each item wasted, until the whole became a mighty and fearful mass of evidence against us, perpetually reminding us, through the medium of our penurious charities, our scanty means, and our apprehensions of the fearful reckoning of each coming day—reminding us by these humiliating remembrances of what we have lost beyond all possibility of recovery.

I am not, however, one of those who would recommend the sacrifice either of comfort or respectability for the sake of economy. A certain air of comfort, a certain degree of respectability, regulated by the sphere in which the parties move, should never be lost sight of by the mistress of a house. More especially, there should be no meanness behind

the scenes, to support an unwarrantable display in public. There is a moral degradation in such meanness wherever it exists; and those persons who have habitually to hide themselves, or to conceal their dinner-table, when a guest approaches, must be living either above or below the line which strict integrity would point out to be observed—they must either be making a figure at other times, and in other places, which they are not able consistently to support; or they must be dressing and living beneath that standard of respectability which properly belongs to their character and station.

In order to proportion all these matters fairly, the bride must be content to wait until time and experience shall have brought to light her true position, and her actual means. The first year of married life will probably be less expensive than the second, and the second less so than the third. Her household furniture, and her own clothing, being good and new, there can be little wanted for repairs; and, therefore, in her domestic expenditure, as well as in her charities, this year will afford no true criterion of the claims she must afterwards expect.

It is, perhaps, owing to this fallacious appearance in their domestic affairs, that so many inexperienced persons are led on to purchase first one article of luxury or indulgence, and then another, even after their better judgment had dictated that such things should be done without; and thus, because they did not find housekeeping at first so expensive as they had anticipated, they have launched out into extravagance which they have had bitterly to regret. Such persons are apt to say, "there can be no loss in furniture, each article will always sell for its full value—there can be no waste in silver, because it is easily got rid of for the price of its own weight." But what absurdity is this! As if, after having made a certain figure before the world, and in society, it was as easy to retreat and sink into a lower grade, as it is to sell a sofa, or a silver fork. Why, this very act of assuming a certain position, and this very dread of falling back, is what the

whole world is striving about at this very hour. It is what so many heads are calculating upon, what so many hands are working out, and what so many hearts are beating for. Whether we look at the wear-and-tear of mental and animal life in our great cities, our ships upon the ocean, our laborers on the land, our congregated thousands pent up in heated rooms, and our miners digging in the bowels of the earth; or whether we turn the page of man's history, and looking at the inner movements of this great principle, behold him in his moments of unrest, note down the fluttering of his ambitious hopes, the agony of his suspense, his disappointment or his triumph, it is all the effect of one great cause, and that the strongest and most universal which prevails in highly civilized communities—a desire to keep advancing in the scale of society, and a dread of falling back from the position already held.

Let us then at least talk common sense; and in doing this, I would advise the newly married woman to look at things in general as they really are, not as they might be. She will then see, that nothing is more difficult to human nature, than to come down even one step from any height it has attained, whether imaginary or real. If, therefore, the appearance a young couple make on their first outset in life be ever so little beyond their means, so far from their being willing to reduce their appearance or style of living to a lower scale, they will ever afterwards be perplexed by devices, and harassed by endeavors, to maintain in all respects the appearance they have so imprudently assumed. This perpetual straitness and inadequacy of means to effect the end desired, is of itself sufficient to poison the fountain of domestic concord at its source. It is bad enough to have innumerable wants created in our own minds which our utmost efforts are unequal to satisfy; but it is worse, as many thousands can attest, in addition to this, for the husband and the wife to be perpetually disputing at their own fireside, about what expenses can be done without, and what cannot. Yet all these consequences follow, and worse, and

more calamitous than tongue or pen can describe, from the simple fact of having begun a new establishment on too expensive a scale.

It may seem like a fanciful indulgence of morbid feeling, but I own my attention has often been arrested in the streets of London, by a spectacle which few ladies would stop to contemplate—a pawnbroker's shop. And I have imagined I could there trace the gradual fall from these high beginnings, in the new hearth-rug scarcely worn, the gaudy carpet with its roses scarcely soiled, the flowery tea-tray, and, worst of all, the bride's white veil. What a breaking-up, I have thought, must there have been of some little establishment, before the dust of a single twelvemonth had fallen on its hearth!—these articles perhaps disposed of to defray the expenses of illness, or to satisfy the very creditors of whom they were obtained on trust.

Now, though I imagine myself to be addressing a class of persons far removed from all liabilities of this kind, yet, proportioned to their higher respectability, is their greater influence; and just so far as that influence is on the side of prudence and economy, will their example operate beneficially upon the classes beneath them.

It seems to be the nature of evil universally to diffuse itself, by rendering one wrong action almost necessary to another. Thus no human being can say, "I will commit this particular sin, and go no further." Most especially is this the case with every kind of deception, just as one wilful deviation from truth draws after it a long train of falsehood. Every deviation from the line of integrity, is followed by the same inevitable consequences, and thus where persons have made up their minds to exhibit before the world a style of dress, or a mode of living, beyond what their circumstances are able consistently to support, an endless train of meanness, artifice, and practical falsehood, is almost sure to follow. How much better is it then, to begin the world with an honest heart and a clear conscience, as regards these points of duty, and neither to carry on

behind the scenes a disgraceful system of extracting from comfort what extravagance demands, nor of exhibiting at first a transient display of luxury or pomp, to be repented of for the remainder of life.

All this, however, requires some self-denial, much principle, and much love. It requires self-denial, because while almost all the world is progressing at this rate, to assume a plainer and more simple mode of living necessarily brings with it a suspicion of being unable to live differently. It requires principle, because temptations present themselves on every hand to purchase what we wish for at less than its apparent value; and it requires love, because with true and deep affection, the wife is so bound up in the interests of her husband, that all things become light in comparison with his temporal and eternal good. Love, therefore, is admirably calculated to lessen all privations arising from a conscientious adherence to strict integrity on these points.

Nothing shows more plainly the mistake under which people in general labor, with regard to the degree of mental and moral capability requisite in a really good wife, than the common expression used to describe a merely well-disposed and ignorant female, when it is said of her, that she is "a good sort of body, and will make an excellent wife." The generality of men, and even some of the most intelligent amongst them, appear peculiarly disposed to make the experiment of marrying such women, as if the very fact of their deficiency in moral discipline, and intellectual power, was of itself a recommendation rather than otherwise, in the mistress of a family; and until women shall really find themselves neglected by the loftier sex, and actually consigned to oblivion, because they are indolent, selfish, or silly, it is to be feared that books may be multiplied on this subject, and even sermons preached, with little or no effect.

Still there is surely something in the deep heart of woman capable of a nobler ambition than that of merely securing as a husband the man she most admires. To make that

husband happy, to raise his character, to give dignity to his house, and to train up his children in the path of wisdom—these are the objects which a true wife will not rest satisfied without endeavoring to attain. And how is all this to be done without reflection, system, and self-government? Simply to mean well, may be the mere impulse of a child or an idiot; but to know how to *act* well, so as that each successive kind impulse shall be made to tell upon the welfare and the happiness of others, is the highest lesson which the school of moral discipline can teach.

Nor is it only by the exercise of a high order of talent that this branch of wisdom can be attained. It is by using such talent as we have, by beginning early to observe and to think, to lay down rules for self-discipline, and to act upon them, so that in after years they shall have become too familiar and habitual to require an effort to maintain. Thus it is unquestionably better that the great work of mental discipline should be commenced after marriage, than not at all; but the woman who delays this work until that time, is not much wiser than the man who should have to learn to walk after he had engaged to run a race.

Already, even in the first year of married life, all the previously formed habits a woman has indulged, begin to tell upon a larger scale than they could have done in her single state. The art of economizing time may now be made to yield a mine of wealth, beyond what riches alone could ever have bestowed; and of this most precious treasure, neither change of fortune, nor place, nor circumstance, will be able to deprive her. If that cleverness which I have attempted to describe in a previous work* has been acquired and practised in her early years, it will now have become like a part of her nature—an additional faculty, which is really nothing less than the power of turning every thing to the best account; and this power she will now be able to exercise at will, for

the benefit of all with whom she is associated.

"But of what use," some may be inclined to ask, "is her learning and her knowledge, now that the actual work of the hand has become a duty of such important consideration?" I answer, that the early attainment of learning and knowledge will be found of more than tenfold importance now; because, in the first place, there will be no longer time for their acquisition; and in the next, they will be wanted every day, if not in their direct, in their relative exercise, to raise the tone of social intercourse around the domestic hearth.

Music, painting, and poetry, taste, tact, and observation, may all be made conducive to the same desirable end; for if by the marriage vow, you hoped to unite yourself to an immortal mind—and I cannot believe of my countrywomen that more grovelling thoughts would be theirs at that solemn hour—you must desire to sustain and cherish such a mind, in all its highest aspirations, and in all its noblest aims. In fact, I know not what love is, if it seeks not the moral and intellectual perfection of its object—if it is not willing, in order to promote this glorious purpose—

"To watch all time, and pry into all space;"

so that no opportunity may be lost, and no means neglected, of raising the tone of a husband's character to the highest scale which man is capable of attaining. It is true, that to comfort and sustain the body is a duty which ought never to be neglected; but the woman who can rest satisfied with this, knows little of the holy and elevating principal of real love—of that love which alone can justify any one in taking upon herself the sacred responsibilities of a wife.

Influenced by this love, the woman of right feeling will perceive, though but recently married, that her position is one of relative importance; that however insignificant each separate act of her life might have been when she dwelt alone, or as an inferior member of a family, she has now become the centre of a circle of influence, which will widen and ex-

* The Daughters of England.

tend itself to other circles, until it mixes with the great ocean of eternity. Thus, it is not only what she says and does, but also what she leaves unsaid and undone, which will give a coloring to futurity, so far as the influence of a wife extends; for to have neglected acts of duty, or opportunities of advice and encouragement, is in reality to incur the risk of consequences as calamitous as those which follow having spoken unwisely, or acted from improper motives.

It is a serious and alarming thought, but one which ought to be ever present with the young wife, that no servant can leave her establishment without being either better or worse for her experience there; that no party can meet beneath her roof without receiving some good or evil bias from the general tone of her conversation and manners; and above all, that the rules she lays down for the regulation of her household, the principles of justice and integrity, of benevolence, temperance, order, and Christian charity, which are there acted upon, will diffuse themselves through the different members of her household, and, flowing thus through various channels, will become the foundation of peace and comfort in other families, they in their turn disseminating the same principles to the end of time.

What a sublime—what an elevating thought! May it fill the happy bosom of every English bride, and may the closing resolution of the first year of her married life be this—“Let others do as they will, *but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*”

CHAPTER III.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN.

In approaching this part of my subject, I cannot but feel that it is one which I have neither the understanding nor the skill to treat with ample justice. All I will venture upon, therefore, is to point out a few of those peculiarities, which women who have been but little accustomed to the society of men,

might otherwise be surprised to find in a husband. If, in pursuance of this task, what I am compelled to say, should appear in any way disparaging to the dignity of men in general, my apology must be this—that it is the very peculiarities I am about to point out, which constitute the chief difficulties a married woman has to contend with, and which, therefore, claim the sympathy of such as are anxious to assist her in the right performance of her duties as a wife.

Were all men excellent, without inconsistencies, and without defects, there would be no need for words of caution or advice addressed to the weaker sex, but especially to wives, for each would have perpetually before her, a perfect model of true excellence, from which she would be ashamed to differ, and by which she would be taught at once to admire and imitate whatever is most worthy of esteem. With gratitude we ought to acknowledge our belief, that morally and spiritually there is perfect equality between men and women; yet, in the character of a noble, enlightened, and truly good man, there is a power and a sublimity, so nearly approaching what we believe to be the nature and capacity of angels, that as no feeling can exceed, so no language can describe, the degree of admiration and respect which the contemplation of such a character must excite. To be permitted to dwell within the influence of such a man, must be a privilege of the highest order; to listen to his conversation, must be a perpetual feast; but to be permitted into his heart—to share his counsels, and to be the chosen companion of his joys and sorrows!—it is difficult to say whether humility or gratitude should preponderate in the feelings of the woman thus distinguished and thus blest.

If all men were of this description, these pages might be given to the winds. We must suppose, however, for the sake of meeting every case, and especially the most difficult, that there are men occasionally found who are not, strictly speaking, noble, nor highly enlightened, nor altogether good. That such men are as much disposed as

their superiors to enter into the married state, is also a fact of public notoriety, and it is to the women who venture upon uniting themselves to such men for life, that I would be understood chiefly to address myself.

In order to render the subject more clear, I will in the first place draw an imaginary line between reasonable, and unreasonable, men. A reasonable man is one who will give a candid hearing to arguments against his own preconceived opinions, and who, when he believes himself to have good cause for acting or thinking as he does, is yet willing to be shown a better cause for acting or thinking differently. The mind of a reasonable man is, therefore, open to conviction, impartial, and comprehensive; and all these qualities, from the very nature of his constitution, he possesses in a higher degree than they can be possessed by woman. An unreasonable man is one who will think and act in a particular manner, simply because he will. If he knows any better reason why he so thinks and acts, he deems it unnecessary to disclose it, because to him this is all-sufficient; and as it is one which no argument can refute, and no opposition overcome, the woman who has to accommodate her habits to his, had need commence the preparation for her married life, by a study of patience from the book of Job.

If, as I have stated, the example and influence of a truly excellent man, are such as to render the very atmosphere in which he lives one of perpetual improvement and delight; on the other hand, there is nothing more discouraging to a woman, than to find defects in the character she has associated herself with for life, having believed it to be thus excellent. Indeed, the peculiarities of the wise, and the inconsistencies of the good, among the nobler sex, have a peculiarly startling effect upon women in general, and often prove the means of retarding their improvement, by awakening the childish and petulant thought, that if such are the best, there can be little use in striving after excellence at all.

All women should, therefore, be prepared

for discovering faults in men, as they are for beholding spots in the sun, or clouds in the summer sky. Nor is it consistent with the disinterested nature of women's purest, deepest affection, that they should love them less, because they cannot admire them more.

Much allowance should be made in all such calculations, for the peculiar mode of education by which men are trained for the world. From their early childhood, girls are accustomed to fill an inferior place, to give up, to fall back, and to be as nothing in comparison with their brothers; while boys, on the other hand, have to suffer all the disadvantages in after life, of having had their precocious selfishness encouraged, from the time when they first began to feel the dignity of superior power, and the triumph of occupying a superior place.

Men who have been thus educated by foolish and indulgent mothers; who have been placed at public schools, where the influence, the character, and the very name of woman was a by-word for contempt; who have been afterwards associated with sisters who were capricious, ignorant, and vain—such men are very unjustly blamed for being selfish, domineering, and tyrannical to the other sex. In fact, how should they be otherwise? It is a common thing to complain of the selfishness of men, but I have often thought, on looking candidly at their early lives, and reflecting how little cultivation of the heart is blended with what is popularly called the best education, the wonder should be that men are not more selfish still.

With all these allowances, then, we may grant them to be selfish, and pity, rather than blame them that they are so; for no happy being ever yet was found, whose hopes and wishes centred in its own bosom.

The young and inexperienced woman, who has but recently been made the subject of man's attentions, and the object of his choice, will probably be disposed to dispute this point with me, and to argue that one man at least is free from selfishness; because she sees, or rather *hears* her lover willing to give up every thing for her. But let no woman

trust to such obsequiousness, for generally speaking, those who are the most extravagant in their professions, and the most servile in their adulation before marriage, are the most unreasonable and requiring afterwards. Let her settle it then in her own mind, whatever aspect her affairs may assume at present, that men in general are more apt than women, to act and think as if they were created to exist of, and by, themselves; and this self-sustained existence a wife can only share, in proportion as she is identified in every thing with her husband. Men have no idea, generally speaking, of having themselves and their affairs made subservient to an end, even though it may be a good one. They are, in fact, their own alpha and omega—beginning and end. But all this, I repeat, is the consequence of a want of that moral training which ought ever to be made the prominent part of education.

Beyond this, however, it may be said to be a necessary part of man's nature, and conducive to his support in the position he has to maintain, that he should, in a greater degree than woman, be sufficient unto himself. The nature of his occupations, and the character of his peculiar duties, require this. The contending interests of the community at large, the strife of public affairs, and the competition of business, with the paramount importance of establishing himself as the master of a family, and the head of a household, all require a degree of concentrated effort in favor of self, and a powerful repulsion against others, which woman, happily for her, is seldom or never called upon to maintain.

The same degree of difference in the education of men and women, leads, on the one hand, to a more expansive range of intellect and thought; and on the other, to the exercise of the same faculties upon what is particular and minute. Men consequently are accustomed to generalize. They look with far-stretching views to the general bearing of every question submitted to their consideration. Even when planning for the good of their fellow-creatures, it is on a large scale, and most frequently upon the principle of the

greatest good to the greatest number. By following out this system, injustice is often unconsciously done to individuals, and even a species of cruelty exercised, which it should be woman's peculiar object to study to avert; but at the same time, to effect her purpose in such a way, as neither to thwart nor interfere with the greater and more important good.

We see here, as in a thousand other instances, the beautiful adaptation of the natural constitution of the two sexes, so as to effect a greater amount of good by their joint efforts, than either could effect alone. Were an island peopled only by men, the strictness of its judicial regulations, and the cold formality of its public institutions, would render it an ungenial soil for the growth of those finer feelings, and those subtler impulses of nature, which not only beautify the whole aspect of human life, but are often proved to have been blossoms of the richest fruit, and seeds of the most abundant harvest. And were a neighboring island peopled by women only, the discord of Babel, or the heated elements of a volcano, could scarcely equal the confusion, the ebullition, and the universal tumult, that would follow the partial attention given to every separate complaint, the ready credence accorded to every separate story, and the prompt and unhesitating application of means, to effect at all times the most incompatible ends.

Those who argue for the perfect equality—the oneness of women in their intellectual nature with men, appear to know little of that higher philosophy, by which both, from the very distinctness of their characters, have been made subservient to the purposes of wisdom and of goodness; and after having observed with deep thought, and profound reverence, the operation of mind on mind, the powerful and instinctive sympathies which rule our very being, and the associated influence of different natures, all working together, yet too separate and distinct to create confusion; to those who have thus regarded the perfect adjustment of the plans of an all-wise Providence, I own it

does appear an ignorant and vulgar contest, to strive to establish the equality of that, which would lose not only its utility, but its perfection, by being assimilated with a different nature.

From the same constitution of mind which leads men to generalize, and to look at every thing they contemplate on an extensive scale, they are seldom good economists. Even the most penurious, the very misers of whom we read such extraordinary accounts, appear to have had a very mistaken idea of the best means of ensuring the great object of their lives. Thus, while most anxious to avoid the least unnecessary expense, some men greatly increase the waste and the outlay of money in their household arrangements, by not allowing a sufficient number of implements, utensils, or other conveniences, and means, for the purpose of facilitating domestic operations, by making each individual thing supply the place for which it is most suitable, and best calculated to secure against absolute waste.

The master of a family is quite capable of perceiving that money for domestic purposes is often in demand; and that through some channel or other, it escapes very rapidly; but he is altogether incompetent—and would that all men would believe it!—to judge of the necessity there is for each particular sum, or how the whole in the end must unavoidably be increased, by making every article of household use answer as many purposes as it is capable of, without regard to fitness, durability, or strength.

But if, on the one hand, our first wish for the increased happiness of the homes of England would be, that men should let these things alone; our next, and perhaps it ought to stand first, and be still more earnest than the other, is this, that all women should be so educated, and so prepared by the right disposition of their own minds, as to afford their husbands just grounds for perfect confidence in their understanding and right principle, with regard to these important affairs. For in the first place, without understanding, no woman can economize; and in the next,

without being supremely anxious for the fulfilment of domestic duty, no woman will. Thus, in addition to other causes of anxiety, sufficiently abounding in the present day, throughout every department of business, hundreds and thousands of men in the respectable walks of life, have to suffer from daily and almost hourly apprehension, that a system of neglect and extravagance in their own houses, is wasting away the slender profits of their labor and their care. On the score of simple kindness, then, one would suppose that a right-minded woman would wish to spare her husband these distressing thoughts; while, on the score of domestic comfort, ease, and independence, it is impossible to calculate the vast amount to which she would herself be the gainer, by convincing her husband that she was not only able, but determined, to manage his household expenditure with the least possible waste.

With all this, however, and often in connection with the most rigid notions of economy, men are fond of personal indulgences; nor ought they ever to be absolutely denied so reasonable a means of restoring their exhausted energy and cheerfulness, more especially, because those who are connected in any way with business, or who have to provide by their own efforts for the maintenance of their families, are generally so circumstanced through the greater portion of each day, as to be as far removed as possible from all opportunity of personal enjoyment.

It would, indeed, be a hard thing to refuse to the husband who returns home from his desk, his counter, or his fields, the best seat, or the choicest food, with any other indulgence his circumstances may afford. Here, however, in certain families, exists a great difficulty; for some men, and I need not say they are of the *unreasonable* class, are determined to have the indulgences, and yet are unwilling to incur the expense. From their habit of disregarding things in detail, and looking upon them only as a whole; they are utterly unconscious of the importance of every little addition in the shape of luxury to the general sum; and thus the wife is placed

in the painful dilemma, either of denying her husband the gratification of his tastes and wishes, or of bearing all the blame of conducting her household expenses on too extravagant a scale.

There are few situations in the long catalogue of female perplexities more harassing than this; for it must ever be borne in mind, that men have a tendency to dislike the immediate instrument of their suffering or privation. And this again brings us to observe another of their peculiarities, so important in its influence upon the whole of married life, that if a woman should venture to judge of man's love by her own, she would probably commit one of the most fatal mistakes by which human happiness was ever wrecked.

The love of woman appears to have been created solely to minister; that of man, to be ministered unto. It is true, his avocations lead him daily to some labor, or some effort for the maintenance of his family; and he often conscientiously believes that this labor is for his wife. But the probability is, that he would be just as attentive to his business, and as eager about making money, had he no wife at all—witness the number of single men who provide with as great care, and as plentifully, according to their wants, for the maintenance of a house without either wife or child.

As it is the natural characteristic of woman's love in its most refined, as well as its most practical development, to be perpetually doing something for the good or the happiness of the object of her affection, it is but reasonable that man's personal comfort should be studiously attended to; and in this, the complacency and satisfaction which most men evince on finding themselves placed at table before a favorite dish, situated beside a clean hearth, or accommodated with an empty sofa, is of itself a sufficient reward for any sacrifice such indulgence may have cost. In proofs of affection like these, there is something tangible which speaks home to the senses—something which man can understand without an effort; and he will sit down to eat, or com-

pose himself to rest, with more hearty goodwill towards the wife who has been thoughtful about these things, than if she had been all day busily employed in writing a treatise on morals for his especial benefit.

Again, man's dignity, as well as his comfort, must be ministered unto. I propose to treat this subject more fully in another chapter, but in speaking of man's peculiarities it must never be forgotten that he ought not to be required to bear the least infringement upon his dignity as a man, and a husband. The woman who has the bad taste, and worse feeling, to venture upon this experiment, effectually lowers herself; for in proportion as her husband sinks, she must sink with him, and ever, as wife, be lower still. Many, however, from ignorance, and with the very best intentions, err in this way, and I am inclined to think such persons suffer more from the consequences of their folly, than others do from their wilful deviation from what is right; just as self-love is more wounded by an innocent, than by an intentional humiliation; because the latter shows us how little we are really esteemed, while the former invests us with a certain degree of importance, as being worthy of a premeditated insult.

It is unquestionably the inalienable right of all men, whether ill or well, rich or poor, wise or foolish, to be treated with deference, and made much of in their own houses. It is true that in the last mentioned case, this duty may be attended with some difficulty in the performance; but as no man becomes a fool, or loses his senses by marriage, the woman who has selected such a companion must abide by the consequences; and even he, whatever may be his degree of folly, is entitled to respect from her, because she has voluntarily placed herself in such a position that she must necessarily be his inferior.

I have said, that whether well or ill, a husband is entitled to respect; and it is perhaps when ill, more than at any other time, that men are impressed with a sense of their own importance. It is, therefore, an act of kindness, as well as of justice, and a concession easily made, to endeavor to keep up this idea,

by all those little acts of delicate attention which at once do good to the body, and sustain the mind. Illness is to men a sufficient trial and humiliation of itself, as it deprives them of their free agency, cuts them off from their accustomed manly avocations, and shuts them up to a kind of imprisonment, which from their previous habits they are little calculated to bear. A sensible and kind-hearted woman, therefore, will never inflict upon the man she loves, when thus circumstanced, the additional punishment of feeling that it is possible for him to be forgotten or neglected.

But chiefly in poverty, or when laboring under depressed circumstances, it is the part of a true wife to exhibit by the most delicate, but most profound respect, how highly she is capable of valuing her husband, independently of all those adventitious circumstances, according to which he has been valued by the world. It is here that the dignity of man is most apt to give way—here that his stout heart fails him—and here then it must be woman's part to build him up. Not, as many are too apt to suppose, merely to comfort him by her endearments, but actually to raise him in his own esteem, to restore to him his estimate of his moral worth, and to convince him that it is beyond the power of circumstances to degrade an upright and an honest man.

And, alas! how much of this is needed in the present day! Could the gay and thoughtless Daughters of England know for what situations they are training—could they know how often it will become their duty to assume the character of the strong, in order to support the weak, they would surely begin betimes to think of these things; and to study the different workings of the human heart, so as to be able to manage even its master-chords, without striking them too rudely, or with a hand too little skilled.

And after all, this great dignity of man, is not much of it artificial, or at least put on like a robe of state to answer an especial end? Yes; and a pitiful and heart-rending spectacle it is, to see the weakness of man's heart disrobed of all its mantling pride—the

utter nakedness, I might almost say, for woman has ever something left to conceal her destitution. In the multitude of her resources she has also a multitude of alleviations to her distress; but man has nothing. In his humiliation he is like a blighted tree. The birds of the air no longer nestle in its boughs, the weary traveller no longer sits down to rest beneath its shade. Nothing is left to it but the clinging ivy, to cover with freshness and beauty its ruin and decay.

It is said of woman that her imagination is easily captivated, that she is won by the hero's fame, and led on by her love of glory and distinction to follow in the sunny path of the illustrious or the great. But far more fatal to the peace of woman, more influential upon her conduct, more triumphant in their mastery over her whole being, are the tears and helplessness of man, when his proud spirit sinks within him, or when he flies from his compeers in the race of glory, to bury his shame, and perhaps his guilt, in her bosom.

I will not ask how often, after this exhibition of his weakness, after regaining his post of honor, and being received again a competitor for distinction, he has forgotten the witness of his humiliation; but I believe it is only as a wife, a mother, or a sister, that woman can be this friend to man, with safety to herself, and with certainty that he will not afterwards rather avoid than seek her, from the feeling that she has beheld him shorn of his dignity, and is consequently able to remind him of the humiliating past. For the wife it might also be a dangerous experiment, even in her fondest and most unguarded moments, to make any allusion to scenes and circumstances of this description; especially to presume upon having necessarily assumed at such times the stronger and more important part. When her husband chooses to be dignified again, and is capable of maintaining that dignity, she must adapt herself to the happy change, and fall back into comparative insignificance, just as if circumstances had never given her a momentary superiority over him.

The peculiarity already alluded to as a

characteristic of men, and as leading them to attach more importance to what is immediate and tangible, than what is remote or ideal, is one which renders them particularly liable to deception, or rather to be, what is more properly called, *practised upon*, than directly deceived; so much so, that I believe any woman who could manage her own temper, *might* manage her husband, provided she possessed his affections. I say *might*, because the mode of management by such means would be utterly revolting to a generous and upright mind. Thus, by fair speech and smooth manners, accompanied with servile and flattering subserviency in little things, some artful women have contrived to win their way to the accomplishment of almost every wish; when a single rash or hasty word, especially if it implied an assumption of the right to choose, would have effectually defeated their ends.

I have listened much when men have been discussing the merits of women, and have never heard any quality so universally commended by the nobler sex, as quietness; while the opposite demerit of a tongue too loud, too ready, or too importunate in its exertions, has been as universally condemned. Thus I am inclined to think that silence in general, and smooth speech when language must be used, are ranked by most men amongst the highest excellences of the female character; while on the other hand, those wordy weapons sometimes so injudiciously made use of, are of all things what they most abhor.

If, however, an artful woman finds it easy to practise upon her husband by the immediate instrumentality of a manner suited to his taste, this mean and degrading system of working out an end, becomes more difficult in proportion to the frequency of its detection, until at last, some men are brought to suspect that all women act indirectly in every thing they do. Hence comes that frequent answer when we ask a simple question merely for the sake of information—"Why do you wish to know?" as if it were impossible for women to be deeply interested where they

had no end to serve, and as if there must of necessity be some hidden motive concealed behind that which is made apparent. This habitual retort falls hardly upon those who never have deserved it, and not unfrequently forms a serious obstacle in the way of obtaining useful knowledge; but it is greatly to be feared that such an expression, with the suspicion it implies, would never have become habitual to men, had not the general conduct of women brought this just punishment upon them.

Indeed, there is something revolting to man's very nature in having to calculate upon that kind of petty artifice which takes advantage of unwariness and credulity, for working out a purpose, even where that purpose may not in itself be wrong. And here we are brought at once to that great leading peculiarity in man's character—his nobility, or, in other words, his exemption from those innumerable littlenesses which obscure the beauty, and sully the integrity of woman's life. From all their underhand contrivances, their secret envyings, and petty spite, man is exempt; so much so, that the mere contemplation of the broad clear basis of his moral character, his open truth, his singleness of aim, and, above all, his dignified forbearance under provocation, might often put the weaker sex to shame.

I am aware that there is much in the situation of both parties to create this difference; that undisputed power to will, and to act, is often accompanied by a kind of moral majesty, which a weaker spirit never can attain, while kept in bondage, either by fear or by absolute restraint. I am aware too, that boys, from their very infancy, are accustomed to a mode of treatment as much calculated to make them determined, frank, and bold, as that of girls is to induce the opposite extremes of weakness, artifice, and timid helplessness; but even with these allowances, I am persuaded there are broad clear features in the moral dignity of man, which it is impossible to contemplate in their strength and reality, without respect and admiration.

And a sacred and ennobling trust it is for

woman to have the happiness of such a being committed to her charge—a holy privilege to be the chosen companion of his lot—to come with her helplessness and weakness to find safety under his protection, and to repose her own perturbed and troubled mind beneath the shelter of his love.

What then, if by perpetual provocation she should awake the tempest of his wrath! We will not contemplate the thought, for there is something as fearful in his indignation, as there is attractive in his kindness, and flattering in his esteem.

Nor, in return for this kindness, are we accustomed to feel gratitude enough; for take away from social life not only the civility, but the actual service done by men, in removing difficulty, protecting weakness, and assisting in distress, in what a joyless, helpless world would women find themselves, left only to the slender aid, and the tender mercies of each other!

It is too much regarded merely as a thing of course, for men to be obliging and attentive; and it is too little remembered at what cost to them we purchase their help and their indulgence. Nor is it only in solitary instances, or for especial favorites, that these efforts have to be made. It is the sacrifice of a whole lifetime for a man to be polite. There is no fireside so warm, but he must leave it on a winter's night to walk home with some female visitor, who has probably no charm for him. There is no situation so eligible, but he must resign it if required. There is no difficulty he must not encounter, no fatigue he must not endure, and no gratification he must not give up; and for whom? All would do this perhaps for one being in the world—perhaps for more; but to be willing to do it every day and every hour, even for the most repulsive, or the most selfish and requiring of their sex—there is a martyrdom of self in all this, which puts to shame the partial kindness and disinterestedness of woman.

It may be said that the popularity of politeness affords at once its incentive, and its reward. But whence then do we receive those many private acts of unrequited ser-

vice, when no other eye is there but ours to witness—no other tongue to praise? and when we ourselves would probably have been the last recipients of such favor, had our companion chosen to assume the right of selecting an object better suited to his taste?

It is from considerations such as these, and I would wish to impress them upon every female mind, that I have not included the selfishness of man among his peculiarities, though some might think the case would warrant a notice of this nature. Yet such is my conviction, that man has much to bear with from the capriciousness of woman; such is my grateful estimate of his uncalculating kindness, not less to be admired because it is expected and required; such too has been my own experience of his general willingness to oblige, where there was little to attract, and still less to reward; that whatever may be said by others, it would ill become me to lift up a voice, and that a public one, against the selfishness of men.

Let us rather look again at that nobility of which I have already spoken, and while we blush to feel the stirrings of an inferior spirit prompting us to many an unworthy thought and act, let us study to assimilate our nature, in all that is truly excellent, with his, who was at first expressly formed in the image of his Maker.

CHAPTER IV.

BEHAVIOR TO HUSBANDS.

LEST the reader should suppose, from the heading of this chapter, that the *management* of husbands is what is really meant, I must at once disclaim all pretension to this particular kind of skill; not because I do not think it capable of being carried out into a system, whereby every woman might become the actual ruler in her own domestic sphere, but because I consider the system itself a bad one, and utterly unworthy of being applied

to any but the most extreme cases of unreasonableness on the husband's part.

With regard to the treatment of husbands, then, so great is the variety of character to be taken into account that it would be impossible to lay down any rule of universal application, except upon the broad principles of kind feeling, integrity, and common sense. Still there are hints which may be thrown out, it is to be hoped, with benefit to the inexperienced; and many of these will refer again to the peculiarity already dwelt upon in the foregoing chapter. The tendency in men which has been described as rendering them peculiarly liable to be impressed by what is evident to their senses, must ever be consulted by the wife who would adapt herself to her husband's mood and character; and although these may vary in every individual, and in the same may change with every difference of time and place, it becomes the duty of a wife, and one would suppose it must also be her pleasure, studiously to observe what those things are, which habitually strike the attention of her husband, so as to convey to him immediate impressions of pleasure or of pain; remembering ever, that all indirect evidence of our tastes and wishes having been consulted, even in our absence, is one of the most grateful offerings that can be made to every human heart.

Thus the general appearance of his home has much to do with the complacency man naturally feels on returning to it. If his taste is for neatness and order, for the absence of servants, and for perfect quiet, it would be absolute cruelty to allow such a man to find his house in confusion, and to have to call in servants to clear this thing and the other away after his return, as if he had never once been thought of, or at least thought of with kindness and consideration, until he was actually seen.

Some men particularly enjoy the cheerful welcome of a clean hearth and blazing fire, on a winter's day; and all are more or less solicitous to stir the glowing embers themselves, rather than to see them stirred by

others. I knew an excellent woman who always had her fire built up in such a manner before her husband came home, as to present a tempting crust for him to break through on his arrival; and I much question whether the good lady was not more loved for this simple act, than she would have been, had her husband found his fire neglected, and herself engaged in tears and prayers for his individual welfare.

But here again we recognise no general rule, for some men unquestionably there are, who would much prefer that their coals should be forthcoming on a future day, than thus unnecessarily expended in a bonfire to welcome their return.

Again, it is of little use that you esteem and reverence your husband in the secret of your heart, if you do not by your manners, both at home and abroad, evince this proper deference and regard. At home it is but fitting that the master of the house should be considered as entitled to the choice of every personal indulgence, unless indisposition or suffering on the part of the wife render such indulgences more properly her due; but even then they ought to be received as a favor, rather than claimed as a right.

Women, in the present day, and in houses furnished as English homes generally are, may enjoy so many advantages in the way of pampering the body, from which men, and especially those engaged in business, are debarred, that they can well afford to give up some of these indulgences to those they love; and few indeed would not rather see them thus enjoyed, than appropriated exclusively to themselves.

There is, however, one great difficulty in connection with this duty, which it is to be hoped all persons are not, like the writer, unable to solve. It is in the important question of self-sacrifice, how far this virtue ought to extend in the treatment of husbands. There is certainly nothing more beautiful to read of in books; and could every act of self-sacrifice be seen and appreciated, there would be nothing more delightful to practise towards those we love. But the question is, does it

tell in any high degree upon the happiness of man? Observation of the world would lead to the conclusion that it does not, for where one husband's heart has been softened with gratitude on discovering how much his wife has suffered and denied herself for his sake, ten times that number of women have been wounded to the very soul at not having their acts of self-sacrifice valued according to their cost.

The fact is, men in general do not see these things, unless told of their existence; and then at once their charm is destroyed. Is it not better, then, to be a little more sparing of such acts, than to do them, and then grudge the expenditure of feeling they require; or to do them, and then complain of the punishment they inflict? Besides which, some luckless women go on in this way, until more and more is expected of them; the husband, in his ignorance of the state of things behind the scenes, never dreaming of what is actually suffered, but rather proposing, in his innocence, that as one thing has been so comfortably given up, another should follow, until at last there bursts upon his unhappy head a perfect storm of feeling, from her who would willingly have been a martyr for his sake, would he only have observed and pitied what she was enduring for him.

On the other hand, those women who calmly and equitably maintain their rights, for rights all women have; who, acting upon the broad principle of yielding what is due from a wife to a husband, make a clear distinction betwixt that, and what would be expected by a tyrant from his slave; who make themselves cheerful and comfortable with what it is proper for them to enjoy, neither withholding what they ought to give up, nor giving up what they cannot afford to lose; such women are upon the whole to be preferred as companions, and certainly they are themselves exempt from a world of wounded feeling, under which the more romantically generous are perpetually suffering, and at the same time weeping and lamenting that they do so.

There is, however, a most delicate medium

in these cases to be observed, for when once woman loses the disinterested generosity of her character, she loses her greatest charm; and when she becomes a stickler for rights, or a monopolizer of good things, presuming upon her greater requirements as being a more delicate and fragile being than man, she may indeed be said to have forfeited all that claims for her sex our interest and our admiration. But, on the other hand, though she may not be aware of it, there is a secret and deep-seated selfishness in the wounded feeling which accompanies a generous act, on finding it not valued according to its cost. Would it not then be wise to let this maxim be our rule—that none should give up more than they are prepared to resign without grudging, whether noticed and appreciated or not.

In my remarks upon the subject of self-sacrifice, I would, of course, be understood to refer only to those trifling and familiar affairs in which the personal comfort of daily life is concerned. The higher and more sacred claims of trial and calamity with which the experience of every human being is occasionally checkered, admit neither of doubt, calculation, nor delay. Here I cannot suppose it possible that a true-hearted woman would feel the least reserve, for here it is her sacred privilege to forget herself, to count no item of her loss, to weigh no difficulty, and to shrink from no pain, provided she can suffer for, or even with, the companion whose existence is bound up with hers.

Whatever doubt may be entertained on the subject of making self, and selfish gratification, subservient to a husband's tastes and enjoyments, in all the little items of domestic arrangement, there can be none with regard to what is right in mixing in society either with friends or strangers. It is here, the privilege of a married woman to be able to show, by the most delicate attentions, how much she feels her husband's superiority to herself, not by mere personal services officiously rendered, as if for the purpose of display, but by a respectful reference to his opinion, a willingly imposed silence when he

speaks, and, if he be an enlightened man, by a judicious turn sometimes given to the conversation, so that his information and intelligence may be drawn forth for the benefit of others.

It is true that a considerable portion of tact is required to manage such matters as these, without appearing to *manage* them at all; for if the husband is once made to suspect that his wife is practising upon him for the purpose of showing how good a wife she is, his situation will scarcely be more agreeable than that of the man who is made a mere lackey of in company, and called hither and thither to do little personal services for his wife, as if she had mistaken him for one of her servants, or, what is more likely, had chosen this means of exhibiting her unbounded influence over him.

Both these extremes are at variance with good taste, to say nothing of right feeling; and here, as in innumerable instances besides, we see, that if the tact I have so highly recommended in a previous work, be valuable before marriage, it is infinitely more so afterwards. Indeed there is scarcely one among the various embellishments of female character, not even the highest accomplishments exhibited by the most distinguished belle, which may not, in some way or other, be rendered a still more exquisite embellishment to married life, provided only it is kept in its proper place, and made always subservient to that which is more estimable.

Thus the most fastidious taste, when employed in selecting what is agreeable to a husband's fancy, becomes ennobled to its possessor; while those accomplishments, which in the crowded drawing-room were worse than useless in their display, may sometimes be accounted as actual wealth, to her who has the good feeling to render them conducive to the amusement or the happiness of her own fireside.

On the other hand, it is painful to hear the complaint so frequently made by married men, that their wives have ceased to touch the instrument whose keys were rendered so sweetly available in the great object of charming

before marriage; and, did not kindness or delicacy forbid a further disclosure of the secrets of their lot, there is doubtless a still greater number who could speak feelingly of their regret, that the air of careful neatness, the becoming dress, and the general attractiveness of look and manner, which first won their attention, had been gradually laid aside, as advancing years and increasing cares had rendered them more necessary as an additional charm to the familiar scenes of domestic life.

Yet in spite of appearances, it is scarcely possible to imagine how there should be, in any other situation, so natural and so delightful a display of personal attractions as at home, and before the one being whom of all the world we love best; especially when we reflect that his destiny being bound up with ours, if we allow him to feel weary of our company, annoyed by our absurdities, or dissatisfied with our personal appearance, he must at the same time suffer doubly from the mortifying conviction, that these things are to remain the same to him throughout the whole of his future life or ours.

What then so natural and so congenial to the best feelings of woman, as to render this long future as pleasing in its aspect as she can? and what so degrading, and so utterly at variance with the beauty of the female character, as, having once secured a legal claim to the protection of a husband, ever afterwards to neglect those personal attractions, which comparatively few women have to be charged with neglecting in their single state? Yet of what importance is it to the careless observer we meet with in general society, how we dress, or whether we look well or ill, compared with what it is to the man who has to see us, and perhaps us alone, seated opposite to him at every meal! Of what importance is it to the stranger that we play badly, or do not play at all—that we draw without taste, and have never learned to converse with sprightliness and ease? His happiness is in no way dependent upon us. He can turn away, and forget us the next moment. But the case assumes a widely

different character, when we look at it as extending through each separate hour of a long lifetime; and surely if there be a natural exultation in having charmed an indifferent person, or even a whole party, for an hour, there must be a higher, and far more reasonable satisfaction, in being able to beguile a husband of his cares, to win him from society which might divert his thoughts from home, and to render that home, not only the scene of his duties, but of his favorite amusements, and his dearest joys.

To this high purpose every intellectual attainment should also be made conducive, for there is much in the life of men, and particularly where business engages their attention, to lower and degrade the mind. There is much to render it purely material in its aims and calculations; and there is much also, in man's public intercourse with his fellow-man, to render him eager and monopolizing in that which centres in himself; while at the same time he is regardless or distrustful of others. As a rational, accountable, and immortal being, he consequently needs a companion who will be supremely solicitous for the advancement of his intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature; a companion who will raise the tone of his mind from the low anxieties, and vulgar cares which necessarily occupy so large a portion of his existence, and lead his thoughts to expatiate or repose on those subjects which convey a feeling of identity with a higher state of existence beyond this present life.

Instead of this, how often does the wife receive home her weary husband, to render him still more weary, by an outpouring of all the gossip she has heard through the day, of the observations she has made upon her neighbor's furniture and way of living, of the personal attentions or slights she has received, with a long catalogue of complaints against her servants, and, worse than all, ten thousand reasons, strengthened by that day's experience, why she should be indulged with some favorite article of dress or luxury, upon which her heart has long been set!

It may be said in vindication of this mode of conduct, that the occupations of men of

business in the present day are such, and so pressing, as to leave them little time, and perhaps less inclination, for interesting themselves in subjects of apparently less urgent and immediate importance; and that, consequently, all endeavor to give their minds a bias in favor of nobler things, would be unavailing. But in reply to this observation, I would ask one question—Have you made the experiment? Have you ever tried whether the introduction of a new idea, appropriately and agreeably clothed, might not be made quite as agreeable as the introduction of a new article of diet, even dressed with the nicest care? Have you then made the experiment *judiciously*? for here lies the secret of all the good we can reasonably expect. If, for instance, you should begin to talk about the stars, when your husband asks for his slippers, or quote poetry when he wants his dinner, the boldest enthusiast would scarcely be wild enough to anticipate any very favorable result.

The first thing to be done in the attainment of this high object, is to use what influence you have so as not to lower or degrade the habitual train of your husband's thoughts; and the next is, to watch every eligible opportunity, and to use every suitable means, of leading him to view his favorite subjects in their broadest and most expansive light; while, at the same time, it is within the region of woman's capabilities, to connect them, by some delicate mode of association, with the general bearing of a man's interests in this world upon his interests in eternity.

It is extremely difficult in writing on this subject to convey my exact meaning, or indeed to avoid the charge of wishing to recommend, instead of pleasant, easy, fireside chat, the introduction of a dull, and dry, or perhaps dogmatical discourse, than which, nothing can be more opposed, both to the tastes and the habits of the writer, as well as to her ideas of the nice art of pleasing and doing good at the same time. Indeed that mode of conversation which I have been accustomed to describe as *talking on a large scale*, is, except on very important occasions, most

inimical to the natural softness and attractiveness of woman. It is not, in fact, her forte ; but belongs to a region of display in which she cannot, or at least ought not, to shine. The excellence of woman as regards her conversation, consists rather of quick, and delicate, and sometimes playful turns of thought, with a lively and subtle apprehension of the bearings, tendencies, and associations of ideas ; so that the whole machinery of conversation, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, may be made, by her good management, to turn off from one subject, and play upon another, as if by the direction of some magic influence, which will ever be preserved from detection by the tact of an unobtrusive and sensitive nature.

It is in this manner, and this alone, that women should evince their interest in those great political questions which arise out of the state of the times in which they live. Not that they may be able to attach themselves to a party, still less that they may *make speeches* either in public or in private ; but that they may think and converse like rational beings on subjects which occupy the attention of the majority of mankind ; and it is, perhaps, on these subjects that we see most strikingly the wide difference betwixt the low views so generally taken, and those which I would so earnestly recommend. If, for example, a wife would converse with her husband about a candidate for the representation of the place in which they live, she may, if she choose, discuss the merits of the color which his party wears, and wish it were some other, as being more becoming ; she may tell with delight how he bowed especially to her ; and she may wish from her heart that the number of votes may be in his favor, because he kissed her child, and called it the prettiest he had ever seen. It is this kind of prattle which may properly be described as *small talk*, and which it is to be feared denotes a littleness of soul. Yet this style of talk may be, and sometimes is, applied by women to all sorts of subjects, not excepting politics, philosophy, and even religion. But, on the other hand, there is an opposite style of con-

versation which may be used with equal scope of application, on almost all subjects, whether high or low : and it is a truth which the peculiar nature of woman's mind renders her admirably qualified to carry out through ordinary life, that so intimately connected are our thoughts and feelings, habits and pursuits, not only with those of other beings of a similar nature, but with a state of existence in which that common nature will be more fully developed, that there is scarcely a fact presented to our knowledge, which has not a connection, either immediate or remote, with some great moral truth ; and scarcely a subject brought under our consideration, which may not be ennobled by conducting, in some way or other, to the improvement of our moral being.

It will readily be perceived, however, that this exercise of the powers of conversation would be utterly unattainable to a woman of ignorant or vulgar mind—that she would alike be incapable of comprehending the desirableness of the object, and the best mode of its accomplishment. And here I would again advert to an expression not unfrequently heard among young ladies, that they do not wish to be clever ; by which we are left to suppose, by their neglect of their own minds, that they mean either well-informed, or capable of judging rightly. Yet without having paid considerable attention to the improvement and cultivation of their intellectual powers, how will it be possible for them to raise the general tone of thought and conversation at their own fireside ?

Although I am not one of those who attach any high degree of importance to the possession of great intellectual endowments in woman, because I believe such natural gifts to have proved much more frequently her bane than her blessing, and because they are not the qualifications of female character which conduce most to her own happiness or the happiness of those around her ; yet if there be any case in which a woman might be forgiven, for entertaining an honest pride in the superiority of her own talent, it would be where she regarded it only as a means

of doing higher homage to her husband, and bringing greater ability to bear upon the advancement of his intellectual and moral good.

Indeed, what is the possession of talent to a woman, when considered in her own character, separately, and alone? The possession of a dangerous heritage—a jewel which cannot with propriety be worn—a mine of wealth which has no legitimate channel for the expenditure of its vast resources. But let her find this natural and lawful medium for its exercise, and we see at once in what an enviable position she is placed. We see at once the height from which she can stoop, the costliness of the sacrifices she is consequently enabled to make, and the evidences, no less valuable, which she can thus bring forward as proofs of her affection.

Nothing, however, can be more delicate and trying than the situation of such a woman, and especially when her husband is inferior to herself; but if he should be absolutely silly, it would require more skill than the writer of these pages can boast, to know what mode of treating him to recommend; for build him up as you will before company, and much may be done in this way by the exercise of delicacy and tact, a truly groveling man will sink again, and there is no help for it. The charitable conclusion is, that a woman so situated must be content to reap the consequences of her own folly, in having made so unsuitable a choice. The best friend on earth would be unable to assist her, nor could the sagest counsel rectify her mistake.

In the case of a highly-gifted woman, even where there is an equal or superior degree of talent possessed by her husband, nothing can be more injudicious, or more fatal to her happiness, than an exhibition even of the least disposition to presume upon such gifts. Let her husband be once subjected to a feeling of jealousy of her importance, which, without the strictest watchfulness, will be liable to arise, and her peace of mind and her free agency are alike destroyed for the remainder of her life; or at any rate, until

she can convince him afresh, by a long continuance of the most scrupulous conduct, that the injury committed against him was purely accidental, and foreign alike to her feelings and her inclinations.

Until this desirable end is accomplished, vain will be all her efforts to render homage to her husband as a superior. He will regard all such attempts as acts of condescension, assumed for no other purpose than that of showing how gracefully she can stoop. In vain may she then endeavor to assist or direct his judgment; he will in such a case most naturally prefer to thwart her, for the purpose of proving his own independence and his power.

The same observations will apply, though in a milder degree, to cases in which there have been any great advantages of wealth or station on the side of the wife. The most unselfish and generous consideration, accompanied with the strictest care, are necessary here to avoid giving occasion of offence to that manly pride which startles at nothing so much as owing dignity to a woman, and being reminded of the obligation.

But if, on the one hand, this situation presents a narrow and critical walk with regard to action, on the other, it affords a boundless and delightful field in which feeling may expatiate; for it is scarcely possible to imagine any consciousness more happy than that of having been the means of conferring affluence or honor upon the being we most love: and if the consequences are such as lead to a trembling apprehension of being perpetually liable to give pain, they also admit of a noble exultation in being enabled by the same means to give an adequate degree of pleasure.

With this feeling, subdued by Christian meekness, and cherished only in her "heart of hearts," it might almost be forgiven to any woman secretly to exult in being favorably distinguished; for to render illustrious a beloved name, and to shed a glory around an honored brow, is at once the most natural, and the noblest ambition, of which the female mind is capable.

In order to render more clear and definite the observations which have been called forth by the subject of this chapter, it has been almost necessary to act the ungracious part of pointing out instances of failure, rather than success. This has been done, however, with the most sincere belief, that such instances, notwithstanding the frequency of their occurrence, arise, for the most part, entirely out of ignorance, or want of thought and observation, and are as frequently accompanied by an amiable and praiseworthy desire to be in all things, such a friend and companion as a reasonable husband would wish.

And after all, what is it that man seeks in the companionship of woman?—An influence like the gentle dew, and the cheering light, more felt throughout the whole of his existence, in its softening, healing, harmonizing power; than acknowledged by any single act, or recognised by any certain rule. It is in fact a being *to come home to*, in the happiest sense of that expression.

Poetic lays of ancient times were wont to tell, how the bold warrior returning from the fight would doff his plumed helmet, and, reposing from his toils, lay bare his weary limbs, that woman's hand might pour into their wounds the healing balm. But never wearied knight, nor warrior covered with the dust of battle-field, was more in need of woman's soothing power, than are those care-worn sons of toil, who struggle for the bread of life, in our more peaceful and enlightened days. And still, though the romance of the castle, the helmet, the waving plume, and the

"Clarion wild and high,"

may all have vanished from the scene; the charm of woman's influence lives as brightly in the picture of domestic joy, as when she placed the wreath of victory on the hero's brow. Nay, more so, for there are deeper sensibilities at work, thoughts more profound, and passions more intense, in our great theatre of intellectual and moral strife; than where the contest was for martial fame, and force of arms procured for each competitor his share of glory, or of wealth.

Amongst all the changes which have taken place in the condition of mankind, it is then not the least of woman's privileges, that her influence remains the same, except only as it is deepened and perfected as her own character approaches towards perfection. It is not the least of her privileges, that she can still be all to man which his necessities require; that he can retire from the tumult of the world, and seek her society with a zest which nothing can impair, so long as she receives him with a true and faithful heart—true to the best and kindest impulses of which her nature is capable; and faithful to the sacred trust committed to her care.

And that it is so, how many an English home can witness—how many a fireside welcome—how many a happy meeting after absence painfully prolonged! Yes, there are scenes within the sacred precincts of the household hearth, which, not the less because no stranger's eye beholds them, repay, and richly too, dark days of weary conflict, and long nights of anxious care. But who shall paint them? Are they not graven on the hearts of English wives? and those who hold the picture there, in all its beauty, vividness, and truth, would scarcely wish to draw aside the veil, which screens it from the world.

CHAPTER V.

CONFIDENCE AND TRUTH.

WITH regard to the behavior of wives towards their husbands, there is one great end to be attained, so unmeasurably beyond all others in its influence upon their happiness and their usefulness, that all which is requisite for the promotion of their true interest, might be summed up in this one recommendation—that the wife should endeavor, before every other earthly thing, and next to the salvation of her soul, to obtain and keep her husband's confidence. Without this, the marriage tie is indeed a galling chain; and the woman who subjects herself to it, less enviable than a real slave. With this—with

the perfect trust of a nobler nature reposing on her own, woman is raised to a degree of moral elevation, which, in her single state, she never could have known; and if her own disposition be generous and grateful, she will feel it a sacred obligation not to abuse this trust.

But the great and important question arises, how is this trust to be secured? With the most ardent desire to enjoy this, the chief good of married life, and the foundation upon which all its happiness must rest, there are two ways in which woman may effectually fail—intellectually, and morally. In the first, she may fail from want of knowledge; in the second, from want of principle.

In the first instance, whatever there may be in her conduct or conversation exhibiting a want of judgment, of that perception of fitness and adaptation, which is invaluable in the female character, and of a proper acquaintance with common things, is calculated to weaken the confidence of her husband in her ability, whatever her inclination may be, to make a good wife, a prudent mistress, or a judicious mother. It is in vain complaining that this sentence is a hard one, when her heart is right, and when she really does her best. It is in vain complaining that her husband does not trust her, either with the knowledge of his affairs, or the management of her own. Confidence in one being is not a matter of choice in another. It is what we ourselves must purchase by an absence of failure on those points, in which the interests of another party are dependent upon us.

If, then, a husband finds in his wife a degree of ignorance which renders her incapable of judging rightly in common things, if he finds that she has never made any proper use of her powers of observation, that she has not been in the habit of thinking to any rational purpose, of discriminating, comparing, or drawing right conclusions from what she has seen and heard, it would be hard indeed to require him to believe that she will act with prudence and propriety as the mistress of a house; and the natural consequence is, that she must be watched, sus-

pected, and in some degree treated as a child.

If, therefore, in a previous work I have earnestly recommended to the Daughters of England an early, and diligent cultivation of their mental powers, it has not been that such embellishments of character as are classed under the head of "Cleverness, Learning, and Knowledge," or "Taste, Tact, and Observation," should merely give zest to conversation, or throw an intellectual charm over the society of the drawing-room; it is that the happy individual who possesses these advantages, may, on becoming a wife, become also a companion in whom her husband can perfectly, and at all times, confide.

There are, however, cases in which the want of this confidence falls hardly, because it is the inevitable result of circumstances, over which the wife in her single state had no control. One of these is where the mind is naturally weak; and here the wife would certainly act most wisely, by placing her actions and opinions under the direction of her husband, and allowing herself to be treated accordingly.

But there are also those, who, from no fault of their own, have, before marriage, enjoyed few advantages as regards mental cultivation. In this case, much may be done in the way of making up for loss of time; and where a studious desire to do so is evinced, where a respectful and judicious reference to the husband's opinion is sometimes made, and at other times a still more judicious silence observed, these proofs of good sense and right feeling, will go a long way towards obtaining the confidence desired.

But a far more serious, and it is to be feared more frequent reason for the loss of this invaluable treasure, is a moral one. And here, so many causes meet and combine in their operation, that it would require no common degree of knowledge of the human heart to be able to point them out with perspicuity and effect. The first thing I shall specify in relation to this part of the subject is, the essential importance there is, that every husband should feel himself perfectly

safe with his wife. "Safe!" exclaims the worthy helpmeet, "with whom could he be safe, if not with me? Do I not watch him, care for him, and wait upon him with a solicitude that would screen him from every approach of harm?" All this may be true enough, and yet you may occasionally have taken advantage of your intimacy, for disclosing weaknesses on his part, which need not otherwise have been known; you may have marked your occasion when company was present, for throwing out hints against him, which you dared not have uttered when alone; or you may have betrayed an evident triumph before your friends, or your servants, on obtaining over him some advantage in opinion, or argument.

Although such offences as these may appear but very trifling items, when separately enumerated, yet their number and variety sometimes make up a sum of considerable magnitude and importance, as they operate upon individual feeling, and evince too clearly a want of delicacy, generosity, or real affection. They lead, in short, to the very natural feeling, on the part of the husband, that his wife is not the bosom friend he had fondly imagined her, that she knows no perfect identity of self with him, but has separate interests to which he and his affairs are liable at any time to be made subservient.

I have already said, that the dignity of man should always be studiously maintained; but there is also a delicate and respectful manner of giving way to a husband in little things, which is the surest means of obtaining concessions on his part, in those which are of greater moment, simply because, having found his wife generally yielding, considerate, and respectful to his wishes, he cannot suppose she will differ from him without some good and sufficient reason for doing so.

Upon the same principle, a wise woman will never be too requiring. She will neither demand from her husband those personal services which are degrading to a man and a gentleman, nor weary his patience by endeavoring to tease him out of every fault; for though the great end of marriage should

be mutual improvement, it is no more than fair, that the wife should allow her husband at least as many faults as he allows her. At all events, when little defects of character, and especially such as may be called constitutional, are quietly and charitably borne with, much strength is gained for making a stand against those which are more serious; and the husband who is kindly permitted to rest himself, if he chooses, in an awkward position, and to wear an unbecoming coat because it is a favorite, will be all the more likely, at the solicitation of his wife, to give up habits which are really more objectionable.

All individual peculiarities, which may not exactly be called faults, should be conceded to in the same manner; always remembering, that what we allow to men on the ground of their love of importance and authority, they equal, and often surpass, in what they yield to our weakness, incapacity, and occasional perverseness. There are many of these peculiarities, that, like our own, might excite a degree of ridicule, which, however, ought never to extend beyond mere playfulness, and not even so far as that, except where it is received in the same spirit.

If it were possible to whisper upon paper, I should here avail myself of a convenient *aside*, to hint that there is often a great deal of unnecessary bustle and importance when men have any thing to do. But why should we mind that—why should we not allow them the satisfaction of feeling, that as regards the little world in which they rule supremely, all space is theirs, and all time! and if we have not patience to look on, and see the order of our house overturned, our dinner waiting, our servants called away from their work, one to fetch paper, another string, and a third to wait until the mighty affair is complete; we have at least the advantage, when the same thing has to be done again, of taking the opportunity to do it ourselves.

A respectful deportment, and a complying disposition, evinced in these and similar cases, with a general willingness to accom-

moderate all household arrangements to a husband's wishes, making every other consideration subservient to his convenience, will ensure for the wife, who consistently does this, a large portion of that confidence upon which her influence and her happiness so much depend.

But the greatest of all claims upon this confidence has yet to be considered; and would there were no occasion, in relation to this subject, so much as to whisper these words into the ear of an English wife—Never deceive! Were all men reasonable, temptations to do so would be infinitely less than they are; for difficult indeed is the lot of that woman, who would act uprightly, whose judgment and principles are good, and who is yet thwarted by a narrow-minded, weak, selfish, or low-principled man.

Let us imagine the case of such a wife, so situated that her lord is absent for the greater part of every day. Let us imagine her, too, surrounded by a family, having the interests of children, servants, and dependents to care for, and anxious to regulate the affairs of her household according to the principles of justice and integrity. She has her own conscience for her guide in all this, and if it be an enlightened one, how is she to make all her actions accord with the views of a husband, who is unenlightened, perverse, or partial, and perhaps jealous of her influence, and consequently determined to thwart her plans? Yet how is she decidedly to oppose his wishes, consistently with the respect which is due from a wife?

Surely the situation of such a woman, could it be contemplated in all its difficulties, and under all its gloomy shades, might be sufficient to deter any one whose married lot was not yet fixed, from risking her happiness with such a man.

If a woman thus situated, could by any honest means contrive to manage her husband, so that he should *not know it*, I think the wisest advocate for the supremacy of the loftier sex, would scarcely deny her such a privilege; and unquestionably there are cases in which unreasonable husbands are made

both happier and better, by being thus managed. Besides, the general order of a household, the direction of servants, and the influence of masters and mistresses over their dependents and inferiors, require that if good sense, right feeling, and sound principles, exist on one side, they should not be made subservient to ignorance, prejudice, and caprice, on the other.

I have said that all women have their rights, and it would be wise to begin early in married life to act upon the principle, which allows to every wife a little sphere of domestic arrangements, with which the husband shall not feel that he has any business to interfere, except at her request, and into which a reasonable man would not wish to obtrude his authority, simply because the operations necessary to be carried on in that department of his household, are alike foreign to his understanding and his tastes. To submit every little act of domestic management to the opinion of a husband, would be unquestionably to have one half of them at least either defeated in their object, or immediately interdicted, from no other reason than pure ignorance of their nature, cause, and effect. Thus, unless a husband can feel sufficient confidence in his wife, to allow her to rule with undisputed authority in this little sphere, her case must be a pitiable one indeed.

I have repeated the word *little*, because I believe it is from an ambitious desire to extend the limits of this sphere, that many have brought trouble upon themselves, by having their authority called in question, more than it ever would have been, had they remained satisfied with a narrower field for its exercise.

But delicacy, and strict fairness, are both required on the part of the wife, to ensure to herself this desirable allowance of free agency, for she must remember, that her husband has also his appropriate sphere of action, and a much more extensive one than hers, in which she has no right to interfere, because, as in the case already stated, she is incapable of understanding what is necessary there; and if on both sides there should be the exercise of this delicacy and fairness, in avoiding all

assumption of a right which does not exist, it is impossible but that real affection should dictate the mutual development of much, if not all, which could interest the feelings of either party.

Thus, there need be no positive concealment, for that is the last thing I would recommend; but an open, honest, straightforward way of acting, as if each mind depended upon the other, less for assistance in its own sphere, than for perfect propriety of feeling, and constant adherence to principle, in the sphere to which it more properly belonged.

It is upon a right observance of distinctions such as these, that the dignity and usefulness of the marriage state in a great degree depend—from remembering that principle must ever be the foundation of action; but that the open disclosure of every act and purpose, must ever be a matter of choice; and if regarded as such, there will be no doubt but mutual love will supply information enough to satisfy the most unbounded curiosity. Thus it has never appeared to me, that the free agency which a judicious wife should be permitted to enjoy in her own department, had any thing to do with concealment; any more than that the transactions in one public office should be said to be concealed from another, because each had its separate rooms and officers. So far from this, I should rather say that a generous nature, and especially that of woman, when implicitly trusted to, and made to feel that trust, will, from a sense of grateful satisfaction, involuntarily disclose its every plan, purpose, and act, not even throwing a veil over its many failures and short-comings in the way of discretion or duty.

Indeed, so powerful in its influence upon the female character, is this feeling of being trusted, that I have often thought if man could know the heart of woman better, he might almost guide it to his pleasure, by simply using this master-key to her gratitude and generosity. But I must not forget, that my business is with the behavior of wives to their husbands, not with that far easier subject in a female hand, the behavior of husbands to their wives.

Among other points of consideration, comprehended under the general head of confidence towards wives, there is one of such paramount importance to the rectitude of woman's conduct in her domestic affairs, that were this one consideration all which had to be taken into account, it would of itself be well worth every endeavor to ensure so desirable an end. I mean the open communication of the state of the husband's pecuniary circumstances to his wife; for I can scarcely imagine any thing more congenial to the best feelings of a faithful wife, than to be made the partaker of all the interest and enjoyment her husband derives from prosperity and success; while, on the other hand, there is no greater cruelty, than that of allowing a woman of good principles and right feelings, to go on ignorantly conducting her household expenses, in a manner inconsistent with the real state of his affairs, when they are in any degree depressed or involved in difficulty.

Yet how often has this been the case! How often has an honest-hearted woman had to bear the charge of having been in reality dishonest to her husband's creditors, when ignorance, not want of principle, was the cause! Besides which, how much may be done by domestic economy, and by a consistently meek and unpretending deportment, if not exactly to avert the calamity of a ruined house, at least to alleviate the wounded and bitter feelings which naturally arise among those who are the greatest sufferers.

The present day is one which claims peculiar attention to this subject; and if from any fault in the wife, from any betrayal of her husband's secrets, any artifice or trickery practised against himself, any assumption of unbecoming importance on her part, any want of consideration for his feelings, or foolish and presumptuous interference with matters peculiarly his own—if from any of these causes, she has shut herself out from his confidence, now, before it shall be too late, is the time to begin a new system of behavior, for which she may eventually be rewarded by being admitted into his bosom-councils, and thus allowed to share, not only in all the

hopes and fears arising out of the fluctuating nature of pecuniary affairs; but also in those nobler acts of self-denial, which accompany sound and enlightened views of the requirements of justice, in all transactions of a pecuniary character.

What, then, of such importance as to obtain the perfect and confiding trust of the companion with whom, or for whom, you have to act in every thing you do! and in order to this happy attainment, nothing is so essential as that you should yourself be true.

There is a spirit of truth and a spirit of falsehood, pervading many of those actions, which could not be said to be either true or false in themselves. Yet, according to the choice we make betwixt these, our behavior will be upright, candid, generous, and free; or it will be servile, artful, selfish, and cowardly. It does not follow, in order to practise falsehood, that we must deviate from the exact letter of truth. There are methods of deceiving, as many, and as various, as the circumstances which checker our experience every day; and if a conscientious adherence to truth is not made the rule of daily life, one act of duplicity will grow out of another, until the whole conduct becomes a tissue of artifice and deceit.

The first and most innocent step towards falsehood is concealment. Before our common acquaintances, there is wisdom in practising concealment to a certain extent; but where the intimacy is so great, the identity so close, as between a husband and a wife, concealment becomes a sort of breach of faith; and with parties thus situated, the very act of concealment can only be kept up by a series of artful endeavors to ward off suspicion or observation of the thing concealed.

Now, when a husband discovers, as in all probability he will, unless these endeavors are carried out to a very great extent—when he discovers that his wife has been concealing one thing from him, he very naturally supposes that she has concealed many more; and his suspicions will be awakened in proportion. It will then be in vain to assure

him that your motive was good, that what you did was only to spare him pain, or afford him pleasure; he will feel that the very act is one which has set him apart in his own house as a stranger, rather than a guardian there—an enemy, rather than a friend.

Why then should you begin with concealment? The answer, it is to be feared, is but too familiar—"My husband is so unreasonable." And here then we see again the great advantage of choosing as a companion for life, a reasonable man, who may with safety and satisfaction be made acquainted with every thing you think or do.

After concealment has been habitually practised, there follows, in order to escape detection, a system of false pretences, assumed appearances, and secret schemes, as much at variance with the spirit of truth, as the most direct falsehood, and unquestionably as debasing to the mind.

But, as an almost inevitable consequence, next follows falsehood itself; for what woman would like her husband to know that she had, for days, months, or years, been practising upon his credulity. If he discovers what she has been concealing, he will also discover, that often when the subject was alluded to, she artfully evaded his questions by introducing another; that sometimes she so managed her voice as to convey one idea, while she expressed another; and that at other times she absolutely *looked* a lie. No, she cannot bear that he should look back and see all this, lest he should despise her; and, therefore, in some critical moment, when brought into that trying situation in which she must either confess all, or deny all, she pronounces at last that fatal word, which effectually breaks asunder the spiritual bond of married love.

And now, it is scarcely possible to imagine a more melancholy situation than that of a weak and helpless woman, separated by falsehood from all true fellowship, either human or divine; for there is no fellowship in falsehood. The very soul of disunion might justly be said to be embodied in a lie. It is in fact the sudden breaking asunder of that

great chain which connects together all spiritual influences; and she who is guilty of falsehood, must necessarily be alone;—alone, for she has no sympathy of feeling with the beautiful creation around her, of which it has truly been said, that “Nature never deceives;”—alone, for in that higher world, where all her secret thoughts and acts are registered, its very light is truth;—alone, for she has voluntarily become a stranger, a suspected thing, an enemy, to that one friend in whose bosom she might have found shelter and repose.

It is a fact which scarcely needs to be repeated, that the closer the intimacy, and the more important the trust, the greater is the individual injury, and consequently the violation of personal feeling, when that trust is abused. Thus when the child is first made to understand that it has been deceived by its mother, the very life of its little soul seems for a moment to be quenched. When the father finds that his prodigal son has but returned to take advantage of his affection and credulity, his wounded spirit sinks, and his weary heart is broken. But when the husband looks with earnest eyes into the countenance whose beauty was once his sunshine; when memory flies back, and brings again her plighted vow, with all its treasury of truth; when he thinks of that fond heart which seemed to cling to his in all the guileless innocence of unsophisticated youth—oh, it is horrible “to be discarded thence,” by the dark demon of distrust, perpetually reminding him, that the bright and sunny tide of early love, upon which he trusted all the riches of his soul, is but a smiling and deceitful ocean, whose glassy surface at once reflects the hues of heaven, and conceals the depths of hell.

It is impossible to speak in language adequate to the importance of this cause, for by failure in this one point, the whole fabric of connubial affection, which might otherwise be made so influential in the promotion of every kind of good, becomes a heap of ruins, as disgraceful to the deceiver as unsightly to the deceived.

Yet, after all, is not the former the greater sufferer of the two? Is it not more miserable to be thus separated from all community of thought and feeling, either earthly or divine, than to be the mere dupe of treachery or guile? Yes, and she feels it so, and out of her very desolation, sometimes awakes the voice of penitence, making confession of some individual act of transgression, and craving, with all the humility of utter wretchedness, to be reinstated in confidence and esteem. But this cannot be. The thing is impossible. The silver cord which has been loosed, no single act of human will can tie again. The golden bowl which has been broken, no single effort of human kindness can restore.

But may not years bring back the confidence so wantonly abused? Oh, blessed thought! Begin, then, a new life. Let truth be the principle of every thought, the echo of every word, the foundation of every act. Truth is invincible—it must—it will prevail. Beautiful as the morning it will arise; glorious as the noonday it will shine forth; calm as the evening it will be followed by repose; and thus each day may feel its gladdening and invigorating influence; while every flower that grows beneath its ray will shed a charm upon the path of life.

But if the regaining of confidence after it has been lost, be an object of such immeasurable importance to attain, what must be the happiness of her who has never lost this treasure! who has borne through all change, and all trial, a true and upright heart towards her husband, who, though he may have sometimes mistaken, and sometimes blamed her, has still been able to say, even when appearances were least favorable, and when perhaps he was most in need of the consolation derived from reposing implicit confidence in her sincerity—

“Thou art my true and honorable wife,
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit this sad heart.”

What, then, if she has sometimes suffered when it has seemed as if a little artifice would have made all things easy, that suffering has

a noble cause. And then the reward! conscience void of offence towards that to whom she can be nothing, if not the fearless look—the unfaltering tone—the ready hand—the soul that might be laid forth before him—the hopes, the plans that might be his—the workings of a mind, whose minutest plans might all the moment be laid bare before his scrutiny—and onward, into the far future, we dream but he might know it all—and yet—the blessed consciousness that, the secrets of all hearts be read on that day of everlasting doom, there be one whose glance, and that the familiar, would not detect a single act of guilt of her whole life inimical to his, or such as might not have been laid to him before.

As the mere escape from the uncertainty, anxiety, and pain, entailed upon the practice of falsehood, all that has to be considered. A brighter picture in the truth, is that in which we see portrayed in living hues, the enjoyment of winning a full heart, and laying open its treasury of thought and feeling to him, the earthly portion, whether it be one of two, must inevitably be blended with a. And it is from this very identity of practice and the love of truth become more important, as a moral obligation in the married state, than in all others. In the perfect truth towards each other of souls thus united, is as necessary to welfare and their happiness, as the concord and concurrence of the different members of the human frame, is to the usefulness and vigour of the whole.

As has already been stated, the privilege of a strict adherence to truth, brings its own reward; for if we voluntarily confess the truth, by this means we win confidence; if we suffer for truth, we have the consolation of suffering in a noble cause, and of gaining strength by every effort made in its support; while, if we unconscientiously to uphold the truth, we thus consistently exemplify the beauty

and the power of this great attribute in the Divine government, we have the still higher satisfaction of doing our humble part to glorify the God of truth.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LOVE OF MARRIED LIFE.

IF, in the foregoing pages, I have spoken of the married state as one of the trial of principle, rather than of the fruition of hope; and if, upon the whole, my observations should appear to have assumed a discouraging, rather than a cheering character, it has arisen, in the first place, from my not having reached, until now, that part of the subject in which the advantages of this connection are fully developed; and if, in the second place, I must plead guilty to the charge of desiring to throw some hindrances in the way of youthful aspiration, it has simply been from observing amongst young people generally, how much greater is the tendency to make the experiment for themselves, than to prepare themselves for the experiment.

If, therefore, I have selected words of warning, in preference to those of an opposite nature, it has been because the tide of popular feeling, especially amongst young women, is already sufficiently strong in favor of matrimonial alliances; while the disposition to ensure all the advantages of such an alliance, appears far beyond what bears any proportion to the desire evinced for submitting to that discipline, by which alone they can be rendered permanent.

That this disproportion betwixt expectation and reality, arises from ignorance, rather than from any other cause, I am fully prepared to believe—ignorance of the human heart, of the actual circumstances of human life, of the operation of cause and effect in human affairs, and of the relative duty of human beings one towards another.

The numbers who have failed in this way to realize in their experience of married life,

the fair picture which imagination painted before it was tried, it would be useless to attempt to enumerate; as well as to tell how many have thrown the blame of their disappointment upon situation or circumstances—upon husband, servants, friends, or relatives—when the whole has rested with themselves, and has arisen solely out of a want of adaptation in their views and habits to the actual requirements of the new state of existence upon which they have entered.

That this state itself is not capable of the greatest amount of happiness which is expected from it, I should be sorry to deny; and and all I would attempt to prove in the way of discouragement is, that its happiness will often prove to be of a different kind from what has been anticipated. All that has been expected to be enjoyed from the indulgence of selfishness, must then of necessity be left out of our calculations, with all that ministers to the pride of superiority, all that gratifies the love of power, all that converts the woman into the heroine, as well as all that renders her an object of general interest and attraction.

It may very naturally be asked, what then remains? I answer, the love of married life; and in this answer is embodied the richest treasure which this earth affords. All other kinds of love hold by a very slender tenure the object of supreme regard; but here the actual tie is severed only by the stroke of death, while mutual interest, instead of weakening, renders it more secure. The love of a parent for a child, natural, and pure, and holy as it is, can never bind that child beyond a certain period within its influence; while the love of a child for a parent must necessarily be interrupted in the course of nature, by the dissolution of its earthly hold. The love of a brother or a sister must ever be ready to give place to dearer claims; and that of a friend, though "very precious" while it lasts, has no real security for its continuance. And yet all these, according to the laws which regulate our being, in their own place and measure, supply the natural craving of the human heart for something beyond itself,

which it may call its own, and in the certainty of possessing which, it may implicitly repose.

Nor is that sage philosophy, which would deny the existence of this craving, or make light of its requirements. There is no moody misanthrope, however solitary the lot he chooses for himself, but cherishes within the secret of his soul, some yearning thought of how he might have been, and could have, loved. There is no agitator of public movements, hardened and sharpened by the fierce contact of contending interests, but seeks some chosen spot of rest, where the cold armor of his selfishness may be thrown off, before that being whose hand has been accustomed to pour into his breast the balm of sympathy and love. There is no outcast from the holier walks of life, no victim of its cruel vices, no maligner of religion and its sacred institutions, but acknowledges, at times, a secret impulse to cling to something more kind, more gentle, and less degraded than himself.

Nor is it only in our human sympathies that this craving is developed. The tame bird, or the pet lamb, is folded to the solitary bosom of the neglected child, with as intense a feeling, as if it knew the thoughts of tenderness pent up and aching there. The miser, whose grovelling soul is alike at enmity with God and man, enters his narrow cell, and, calling to his side his faithful dog, smiles on the unconscious animal with a look which at once reveals the history of his wasted heart. And strange to say, it is sometimes even thus with ambition, and with many of those aims and occupations which absorb man's life. They are followed, not for the results they bring, so much as for the promises they offer—for the vague hopes they hold out, that their entire accomplishment will satisfy the cravings of an insatiable soul.

But, perhaps, more than in any other case, is it thus with literary fame, in the pursuit of which how many are urged on by a strong, though it may seem to some a fanciful impression, that the voice of feeling which has failed to find an echo in its own immediate

re, may, in the wide world through which sent forth, touch in some unknown at a sympathetic chord, and thus awaken pensive emotion.

it if with man, the most powerful and endent of created beings, there ever ex-his want of spiritual reliance and com-on, what must it be to the weaker heart oman, to find one earthly hold after an-giving way, and to look around upon great wilderness of life, in which she ls unconnected, and consequently alone? ere be one principle in woman's nature ger than all others, it is that which pts her to seek sympathy and protection some being whom she may love, and hom she may be loved in return. The ence of fashion is, perhaps, of all others urch the female sex is exposed, the most ening to the heart—the most chilling to arm and genuine emotions. Yet I much tion whether the successful candidate ublic admiration, would not sometimes agly retire from the splendid circle in h she is the centre of attraction, to re-in private the real homage of one un-istigated, noble, and undivided heart. ing failed in this, woman's first and most sable ambition, how often does she go into the world, to waste upon the cold polished surface of society, those capa-s of thought and feeling which might, re wisely directed, have made a happy ; and how often is she compelled to appalled and horror-struck, upon the emptiness of the reward which follows expenditure, when the same outlay in a ent soil, and under happier culture, t have enabled her to gather into her bo-a hundred fold the richer fruits of con-ce and affection!

is only in the married state that the dless capabilities of woman's love can lly known or appreciated. There may, her situations, be occasional instances of c self-sacrifice, and devotion to an earth-ject; but it is only here that the lapsee, and the familiar occasions of every can afford opportunities of exhibiting

the same spirit, operating through all those minor channels, which flow like fertilizing rills through the bosom of every family, where the influence of woman is alike happy in its exercise, and enlightened in its charac-ter.

Out of all which our first parents sacri-ficed when they lost their high estate, it was mercifully permitted them to retain their mutual love; and it is possible to imagine that the mother of mankind, even when look-ing her last upon that Eden whose flowers her care had tended, would turn to the com-panion of her banishment with a deeper and more fervent appeal to his sympathy and af-fection, than she ever could have felt the need of, in those bowers of beauty where a leaf was never seen to fade. Thus out of her very weakness, and from among the many snares which have beset the path of woman since that day of awful doom, has arisen a more intense desire, and a more ur-gent need, for the support of a stronger na-ture, with which her own can mingle, until it almost loses the bitter consciousness of having forfeited all claim to be still an inhab-itant of Paradise.

Lest, however, the temptations to this for-getfulness should stand between her and the necessity there is to seek a higher and a hol-lier rest, there has fallen on her earthly lot some shadows, which the light of earthly love is not sufficient to dispel. Even love itself has sometimes failed; and, worse than all, in her own bosom has become extinguished.

In order to know how to avert this calam-ity, it is necessary to endeavor to look calm-ly and dispassionately at the subject in every point of view to dispel the visions of imagi-nation, and to ask what is the real cause of failure, where woman has so much at stake.

Love may arise spontaneously, but it does not continue to exist without some care and culture. In a mind whose ideas are all float-ing at large, and whose emotions of feeling or affection are left to the prompting of im-pulse, unrestrained by the discipline or rea-son, there will naturally arise strange wander-ing thoughts, which will be likely at any

unguarded moment to undermine so frail a fabric, as love under such circumstances must ever be.

One tendency in the mind of the married woman who has thus neglected the government of her own feelings, will be, on every occasion of momentary vexation or dissatisfaction, to compare her husband with other men to his disadvantage; than which nothing can be more dangerous, or more inconsistent with that faithfulness which ought ever to be a leading characteristic in the love of married life. Nor can any thing well be more impolitic or absurd; since there is no human being, however excellent, who may not, in some way or other, be made to suffer by comparison with others. Besides which, what right have we, as frail and erring creatures, to aspire, in this connection, to an alliance with a being entirely faultless, or even more perfect than ourselves?

If then there should occasionally arise feelings of disappointment and dissatisfaction, as the lapse of time and a nearer acquaintance develop a husband's faults, it is good to bear in mind that the same exposure of your own, from the same cause, must necessarily have taken place; and by often dwelling upon this view of the subject, a degree of charitable feeling will be excited, more calculated to humble and chasten the heart, than to embitter it against the failings of another.

Still there are frequent provocations of temper, which some men through ignorance, and others from perverseness, or the love of power, are not over scrupulous to avoid; and these, to an irritable temperament, are often more trying than greater deviations from what is strictly right.

Against the petulance and occasional resentment which an accumulation of these trials call forth, there is one great and solemn consideration, by which a woman of right feeling may, at any time, add sufficient weight to the balance in her husband's favor—she may think of his death, of the emotions with which she would receive his last farewell, and of what would be her situation if deprived at once of his love, his advice, and

his protection. We are all perhaps too little accustomed to such thoughts as these, except where illness or accident places them immediately before us. We are too much in the habit of looking upon the thread of life with us, as far more likely to be broken first, and of thinking that the stronger frame must necessarily endure the longest. But one realizing thought that the sentence of widowed loneliness may possibly be ours—how does it sweep away, as by a single breath, the mist of little imperfections which had gathered around a beloved form, and reveal to us at one glance the manly beauties of a noble, or a generous character!

Even beauties less than these—the kind look, the cordial welcome, the patient answer, the mild forbearance, the gentle and familiar acts of every day which never-tiring affection prompted, and the smile which beamed upon us perhaps when we deserved it least—all these come back, and live before us, as often as we think of the possibility of losing them forever. And it is good to have the heart thus softened and subdued—thus made to feel how completely the petty provocations of each day would vanish from our minds, if we stood by the dying couch of him who never offended but in little things, and heard the parting benediction of the friend who would fain leave behind him a blessing, which his living presence had failed to bestow.

It is an unspeakable privilege enjoyed by the women of England, that in the middle ranks of life, a married woman, however youthful or attractive, if her own manners are unexceptionable, is seldom, or never, exposed to the attentions of men, so as to lead her affections out of their proper channel.

How much is gained in domestic and social happiness by this exemption from customs which prevail on the continent, it is here unnecessary to attempt to describe; for I cannot imagine there is any right-minded woman, still less any Christian wife, who does not number it among the peculiar blessings of her country, and her sex. Yet even in our privileged land, where the established rules of society are so much more favorable

than in others, to the purity of social morals, and the sanctity of home-enjoyments, there may occasionally occur an attempted deviation from these rules, on the part of ignorant or unprincipled men. In all such cases, however, the slightest approach to undue familiarity is easily repelled, by such a look and manner, as all women know how to make use of in discountenancing what is not acceptable; and even in more trifling cases, or where the temptation to be agreeable overcomes the inclination to be otherwise, I believe that a frank and easy manner of speaking of a husband with respect and evident affection, would answer every purpose of putting a stop to such advances; while, on the other hand, nothing can be more likely to invite them, than speaking in complaining terms either of a husband, or of his behavior towards yourself.

But the surest safeguard both at home and abroad, and the truest test by which to prove the propriety of every look, and act, and word, when mixing in the society of other men, is a sincere and faithful love for the companion of your choice. Without this, it would be vain to lay down rules by which a wandering fancy might be kept in check. An enlightened conscience alone, in such a case, can point out exactly how to act; while with this love, there needs no other guide. It is itself so pure, so constant, and so true, that conscience only echoes what its happier voice approves.

And now, having thus loved your husband, and cast in your lot with his—having chosen his portion, his people, and his God for yours, it is meet that you should love him to the last. It is true, there are cases where a gradual deterioration of character, or a sudden fall from moral rectitude, renders affection the last offering a stranger would think it possible to make at such a shrine; but if others turn away repelled, there is the more need for such a man, that his wife should love him still—there is the more need that one friend should remain to be near him in his moments of penitence, if such should ever come; or to watch the lingering light of

better days, so as if possible to kindle it once more into a cheerful and invigorating flame.

Of all the states of suffering which have ever swelled the ocean of human tears, there is none in the smallest degree comparable to the situation of such a wife; yet, as if by some law of nature, which raises the sweetest flowers from out the least apparently congenial soil, it is here that we so often see the character of woman developed in all its loveliest and noblest attributes. It is here that we see to what an almost superhuman height that character can rise, when stripped of its vanity, and divested of its selfishness. Alas! that she should wait for the chastening of a cruel scourge, before she will even aspire to that perfection of moral beauty of which her nature is capable!

If to love the vicious, or the degraded, were necessarily to love their vices too, it would be a melancholy picture to see an amiable woman falling into such a snare. But though unquestionably too many do this, and sometimes almost unconsciously assimilate themselves with vice, either from constant association with what is evil, or from the habit of referring their own judgment of right and wrong to that of a polluted and degraded mind; there are others who, with the nicest discrimination, and with the clearest convictions on these points, go on from day to day beholding what they hate, in the most intimate connection with what they love.

While contemplating the fate of such, our only consolation is to compare their situation as it is, with what it would be, were there no channel open to mercy and to hope, for the outpourings of a heavily laden heart through the medium of prayer. Friends bring no comfort, earth holds no consolation for those who weep such tears; yet often in the depth of their affliction have they been enabled to own and bless the chastening of a Father's hand, and to feel that in that very chastening there was love!

But it is time to turn our attention to that portion of the love of married life, which belongs more especially to the other sex; and here the first thing to be observed is, that no

man's heart can be said to be really gained before his marriage. He may be the most obsequious of beaux, the most flattering of admirers, and even the most devoted of lovers; but his affection has not been tried in the way which brings it to the severest test. It is true it may have been tried by absence, by caprice, by coldness, or neglect; but it has yet to be tried by the security of entire possession; by the monotony of sameness; and, I grieve to add, too often by the neglect of those personal attractions by which it was at first so studiously invited.

How little do women think of this, when, by the security of the marriage tie, they are rendered careless of the preservation of the richest jewel in their bridal wreath, and one which never yet was secured to its possessor by any outward bond! How little do they reflect, that while it is the natural tendency of woman's heart to become more tenderly attached to the being with whom she is thus associated, it is not so with that of man! And thus it becomes the study of a life, to retain in all its freshness and its beauty, the precious gem committed to their trust.

Nor should we murmur that it is so. For once possessed of this inestimable treasure, and secure of its continuance, what should we aspire to beyond our present state? Even as things are, we see a marked neglect in the behavior of some wives; as if their husbands were equally bound to love, as to protect them. What then would be the degree of carelessness prevailing among women, if this were really the case, and if the heart of man invariably, and of necessity, went along with his duty as a husband!

Happily for our sex, however, there are means of securing this treasure, more efficacious than the marriage vow; and among these, I shall mention first, the desirableness of not being too requiring. It must ever be borne in mind, that man's love, even in its happiest exercise, is not like woman's; for while she employs herself through every hour, in fondly weaving one beloved image into all her thoughts; he gives to her comparatively few of his, and of these perhaps

neither the loftiest nor the best. His highest hopes and brightest energies, must ever be expected to expend themselves upon the promotion of some favorite scheme, or the advancement of some public measure; and if with untiring satisfaction he turns to her after the efforts of the day have been completed; and weary, and perhaps dispirited, comes back to pour into her faithful bosom the history of those trials which the world can never know, and would not pity if it could; if she can thus supply to the extent of his utmost wishes, the sympathy and the advice, the confidence and the repose, of which he is in need, she will have little cause to think herself neglected.

It is a wise beginning, then, for every married woman to make up her mind to be forgotten through the greater part of every day; to make up her mind to many rivals too in her husband's attentions, though not in his love; and among these, I would mention one, whose claims it is folly to dispute; since no remonstrances or representations on her part will ever be able to render less attractive the charms of this competitor. I mean the newspaper, of whose absorbing interest some wives are weak enough to evince a sort of childish jealousy, when they ought rather to congratulate themselves that their most formidable rival is one of paper.

The same observations apply perhaps in a more serious manner to those occupations which lead men into public life. If the object be to do good, either by correcting abuses, or forwarding benevolent designs, and not merely to make himself the head of a party, a judicious and right-principled woman will be too happy for her husband to be instrumental in a noble cause, to put in competition with his public efforts, any loss she may sustain in personal attention or domestic comfort.

A system of persecution perseveringly carried on against such manly propensities as reading the newspaper, or even against the household derangements necessarily accompanying attention to public business, has the worst possible effect upon a husband's tem-

per, and general state of feeling. So much so, that I am inclined to think a greater amount of real love has been actually teased away, than ever was destroyed by more direct, or more powerfully operating means.

The same system of teasing is sometimes most unwisely kept up, for the purpose of calling forth a succession of those little personal attentions, which, if not gratuitously rendered, are utterly destitute of value, and ought never to be required.

To all married women, it must be gratifying to receive from a husband just so much attention as indicates a consciousness of her presence; but with this acknowledgment, expressed in any manner which may be most congenial to her husband's tastes and habits, a woman of true delicacy would surely be satisfied without wishing to stipulate for more.

Still less would she annoy him with an exhibition of her own fondness, under the idea of its being necessarily returned in kind. It is a holy, and a blessed mystery, from the secrets of which, in its mastery over the human mind, almost all women who have ever been beloved, have learned the power of their own tenderness; but in proportion to the purity of its nature, and the sacredness of its exercise, is its capability of being abused and degraded. Thus, all exhibition of fondness before a third party, may justly be looked upon as indicating a total ignorance of the intensity, and the purity, of that which alone deserves the name of love; while, could one imagine the possibility of such a thing, all exercise of this fondness made use of for the purpose of obtaining advantage over a husband's judgment or inclination, could only be supposed to arise out of the meanest impulse of a low, an artful, and a degraded mind.

But we cannot for a moment imagine such things really are. We cannot believe that a woman conscious of her personal attractions, could hang about her husband's neck, or weep, or act the impassioned heroine, for the base purpose of inducing him to make some concession, which in his calmer moments he could not be prevailed upon to grant. No, the true heart of woman knows too well, that

that sweet gift of heaven, granted in consideration to her weakness, was never meant to be made use of as an instrument of power to gain a selfish end; but was permitted her for the high and holy purpose of softening the harder and more obdurate nature of man, so as to render it capable of impressions upon which the seal of eternity might be set.

It requires much tact, as well as delicacy, to know how to render expressions of endearment at all times appropriate, and consequently acceptable; and as love is far too excellent a thing to be wasted, and tenderness too precious to be thrown away, a sensible woman will most scrupulously consult her husband's mood and temper in this respect, as well as remember always the consideration due to her own personal attractions; for, without some considerable portion of these advantages, it will be always safest not to advance very far, unless there should be clear and direct encouragement to do so. Pitiful pictures have been drawn in works of fiction of the hopelessness of efforts of this nature; but one would willingly believe them to be confined to fiction only, for there is happily, in most enlightened female minds, an intuitive perception on these points, by which they may discover almost instantaneously from a look, a tone, a touch responsive to their own, how far it may be desirable to go, and by what shadow they ought to be warned, as well as by what ray of light they ought to be encouraged.

It may be easily imagined how an ignorant, or selfish woman, never can be able to understand all this, and how she may consequently make shipwreck of her husband's happiness, and her own peace, simply from never having known, observed, or felt, what belongs to the nature of the human heart in these its most exquisite touches of light and shade; while, on the other hand, not the highest intellectual attainments, with the noblest gifts of nature, nor all the importance and distinction which these attributes obtain for their possessor in the world, will be able to efface for a moment the delicate perceptions of a truly sensitive woman, or to render

her in the deep and fervent love of which she is capable, otherwise than humble, and easily subdued; especially when she comes with childlike simplicity to consult the dial of her husband's love, and to read there the progress of the advancing or receding shadows, which indicate her only true position, through the lapse of every hour.

It is an act of injustice towards women, and one which often brings its own punishment upon talented men, when they select as their companions for life, the ignorant or the imbecile of the other sex, believing that because they are so, they must be more capable of loving. If to be incapable of any thing else, implies this necessity, it must be granted that they are so. But of what value is that love which exists as a mere impulse of nature, compared with that, which, with an equal force of impulse, combines the highest attributes of an enlightened mind, and brings them all with their rich produce, like flowers from a delicious garden, a welcome and appropriate offering at the shrine whereon the heart is laid.

Still I must repeat, that it is not the superiority of talent, but the early and the best use of such as we possess, which gives this power and beauty to affection, by directing it to its appropriate end. For as in other duties of woman's life, without knowledge she cannot, if she would, act properly; so in the expression and bestowment of her love, without an intimate acquaintance with the human heart, without having exercised her faculties of observation and reflection, and without having obtained by early discipline some mastery over her own feelings, she will ever be liable to rush blindly upon those fatal errors, by which the love of married life so often has been wrecked.

In connection with this subject, there is one consideration to which sufficient weight is seldom given; and that is, the importance of never trifling with affection after the nuptial knot is tied. To do this at any time, or in any way, is scarcely consistent with the feelings of a deeply sensitive and delicate mind: but leaving the display of caprice to those

who think it gives zest to the familiarity of courtship, it cannot be too deeply impressed upon the female mind, that with the days of courtship it must end.

There are innumerable tests which might be applied to the love of married life, so as to ascertain the degree of its intensity, or the progress of its declension; but who would wish to apply them?—or who, even if they did, would *dare* to make so critical an experiment? If there be any cause for its existence, the consciousness comes soon enough, that the wife is not all to her husband which the flattering promises of early love prepared her to expect; and if there be no cause for the slightest shadow of suspicion that her star is beginning to go down, why trouble her own repose, and that of her husband, by questioning the reality of what it would be worse than death to doubt?

All teasing, all caprice, all acting, for the purpose of renewing an agreeable effect, are therefore inimical to the mutual trust, and the steady confidence in reciprocal affection, which are, or ought to be, enjoyed by individuals thus bound together by an indissoluble tie. Not that the writer would for a moment wish to discountenance that harmless vivacity with which some women know so well how to charm; or to speak of the privacy of married life as consisting of dull and sombre scenes. So far from this, it is her firm belief, that nothing tends more to animate and renew the feeling of affection in the mind of man, than the cheerfulness of his fireside companion.

It is here, then, that the display of native wit and humor may be enjoyed with the greatest zest, for here it is safe; and the husband who comes home to have his spirit refreshed by an easy, natural, and well-timed description of the amusing incidents which have taken place during his absence, will not be the most likely to prefer another fireside to his own.

Even in illness, but especially when laboring only under a slight degree of indisposition, by those who have made cheerfulness a familiar habit, much may be done to prevent the dou-

ble burden of sickness and sorrow falling upon a husband at once.

There is a vast difference between being as ill as you can be, and as well as you can be. To aim at the latter rather than the former, is the duty of every one, but especially of the married woman, the great business of whose life is to soothe and cheer, not to depress, to weary, or to annoy. If therefore, before marriage, she has been deluded into the notion that a multiplicity of little ailments invested her character with an interesting kind of delicacy; the sooner she becomes perfectly well after marriage, the better it will be for herself, and for all around her.

Lest, however, the liberty of these remarks should appear to touch unkindly those who are *really* afflicted, I must refer the reader for a proof of what may be done in the way of bearing pain with cheerfulness and resignation, to those many beautiful instances which adorn the history of woman, where her own sufferings appear to be forgotten in the intensity of her desire to make others happy. And here again we see the necessity of having made such acts of self-sacrifice habitual. No human being, however great the momentary effort, can practise this kind of self-government, or consistently exercise this degree of generosity, merely from the force of transient impulse; and when the greater claims upon the attention of a wife render illness to her a more painful and trying ordeal than it has ever been before, she will feel the greater need of having practised, in her early years, the habit of so far restraining the expression of personal feeling, as by making the best of her afflictions, and gratefully embracing such opportunities of enjoyment as still remain, to be able to render it not an irksome duty, but a privilege, to be near her in sickness and suffering.

It is a great pity when those trials which render affection so essential to our support, should be made the means of driving it away. Nor is it at all necessary that this should be the case with men; for there is a kindness, and a forbearance, mingled with their higher virtues, which sometimes elicits from them

the most devoted and delicate attentions in the season of illness; and all who have experienced, and felt the real value of such attentions, will estimate them too highly, to be willing that a habit of fretful or unnecessary complaining should thus deprive the hour of suffering of its greatest earthly consolation.

It would not be just, even if it were possible, to speak on this subject, and to leave unmarked by expressions of gratitude and admiration, the gentle kindness and untiring patience, with which some men can devote themselves to the duties of a sick-room; or how, by their superior strength, added sometimes to a higher degree of tenderness and delicacy, they can render those services to a weak or suffering wife, which nothing but the love of married life can either purchase or repay. But though one would willingly forgive the wife, who for the gratification afforded by such kindness, would almost wish to suffer, it must ever be remembered, that not by complaining of every little ache and pain, is such kindness to be purchased; but by bearing, with sweetness and serenity, those trials which the all-wise Disposer of human events sees meet to inflict.

It is in seasons such as these, that the perfect identity originating in the marriage bond, is most deeply felt—that identity which gives a spiritual nature to an earthly union. It is true we are told there is no such thing as giving in marriage in heaven; but we are left to enjoy the happiness of believing, that there is something almost heavenly in the “marriage of true minds”—something which brings us nearer, than any other circumstance in this sublunary state, to an apprehension of what must be the enjoyment of those regions of felicity, where all existences are blended into one, and where the essential principle of that one is love.

Nor is it the least wonderful property belonging to this drop of sweetness in life's great ocean, that it can exist almost independently of outward circumstances. How many of the hapless inheritors of poverty and suffering have nothing else; and yet their lot is scarcely to be called bitter, so long

as they have this. On the other hand, how many a desolate but jewelled brow, would doff its envied wreath, for the privilege of sharing this enjoyment with one who was equally loving and beloved!

Let us not, however, fall into the romantic notion, that outward circumstances have nothing to do with the maintenance of this strong feeling of identity. Poverty of itself, or privation in the abstract, would probably never be able to shake the foundation of man's love, or woman's either; but such is the complicated texture of the human mind, that no single portion of suffering or enjoyment exists to us alone, but each draws along with it a train of associating links, by which it is connected sometimes with what is most heterogeneous and dissimilar to its own nature. Thus it is the manner in which poverty is borne, which so frequently constitutes the greatest trial of love—the mutual complainings, recriminations, and suspicions, which it calls forth; not its suffering, its destitution, and its abasement, for under these it is within the province of love to support and to console; and, on the other hand, it is the vanity, the dissipation, and the diversity of interests excited by circumstances of extraordinary prosperity, which often prove fatal to the love of married life; when the wider range of duties and privileges, belonging to an exalted station, might have constituted a stronger bond of sympathy between individuals thus elevated together.

Thus the fault is not in the love of married life, that it gives way so often under the trial of outward circumstances; but in the power so frequently brought to bear against it, from the wrong feelings which circumstances are allowed to call into action.

Of man's love it must ever be remembered too, that if once destroyed, it is destroyed forever. Woman has the strong power of her sympathy and her imagination, by which interest can be re-awakened, and the past can be made to live again; but the nature of man's affection admits of no very potent stimulus from such causes. When once his tenderness toward the object of his affection

is extinguished, his love may too truly be said to have lost its bloom, its freshness, and its intensity. A sense of duty may still supply what propriety requires, and a feeling that his doom is fixed may prevent any great expenditure of thought in sad and unavailing regrets; but who that has looked "on this picture and on that"—who that has observed the dull and leaden aspect presented by married life under these circumstances, could contemplate with equanimity of mind, the possibility of its succeeding in the place of that bright and glowing picture first brought to light by the early promise of mutual love!

It should then be the first and last study of every married woman, to preserve this picture in all its purity, and all its freshness; remembering ever that it is not from the great and stirring accidents of time, that the most danger is to be apprehended; but that sometimes—

"A word unkind or wrongly taken;
Or Love, which tempest never shook,
A breath—a touch like this hath shaken."

It is not, therefore, by exemption from outward calamity, that woman can preserve this treasure of her life; but by maintaining through all the little incidents of daily intercourse a true and faithful heart towards her husband—true in its own affections—true also to the various requirements of human nature—and true in its attachment to his interests, both as they relate to time and to eternity.

CHAPTER VII.

TRIALS OF MARRIED LIFE.

If in describing the domestic happiness of English homes, the love of married life were all which had to be dwelt upon, the task of the writer would be like that of one who enters a garden for no other purpose than to cull the flowers; but as among the fairest productions of nature, the intrusion of noxious weeds must ever be anticipated; so among the brighter scenes of human life, dark pas-

sages must occasionally be expected; and happy will it be if they only appear like passing clouds over the landscape, leaving the aspect of the whole more vivid and beautiful, for the trifling interruption to its sameness and repose.

That married life has its peculiar trials, it would imply great ignorance of the actual state of human affairs to attempt to disprove; and while we gladly admit the fact, that it is possible to be happier in this state, than any human being can be alone; we must also bear in mind, that it is possible to be more miserable too—perhaps for this very reason, that the greatest trials connected with this state of existence, are such as cannot be told, and therefore such as necessarily set the sufferer apart from all human sympathy and consolation. Many of these, however, may be greatly ameliorated by a willingness to meet them in a proper way; but more especially, by an habitual subjection of self to the interests and the happiness of others.

Among the trials peculiar to married life, we will first speak of those of temper; and here it is necessary to refer again to the common delusion prevailing among young women, which leads them to look forward to the time of marriage, as the opening of a scene of unlimited indulgence, where every wish will be consulted, and every inclination gratified to its full extent, and where consequently it will be impossible that *offences* should ever *come*.

It requires but little reflection to perceive, that even if the husband had been sincere in all the promises, which as a lover he held forth, it would not be in his power to render the lot of any woman one of uninterrupted enjoyment; for however faithfully his own part might be fulfilled, it would still be the inevitable consequence of thus setting out together in the serious business of conducting a household, that circumstances should press upon both, so as either to thwart their inclinations, or bend them to submission. Beyond these, however, it must be allowed, that there are no trials of temper arising out of the cross occurrences incident to family af-

fairs, at all to be compared with those which belong to the close intercourse of persons of dissimilar habits bound together for life.

It is a curious fact, that however irritable the temper may be, a stranger has comparatively no power to ruffle it; while, on the other hand, the closer the intimacy, the greater is the liability both to pain and provocation, where that intimacy is made use of as a key to the secret passages of the heart. Hence the bland and patient smiles with which a stranger is sometimes listened to, when a sister or a brother conversing in the same style, would scarcely be endured; and hence the peevish answer sometimes bestowed upon a husband, when a guest is immediately spoken to in the gentlest and most conciliating tone.

There is something, too, in the bare fact of being indissolubly bound together, which, instead of rendering it for that reason an object of supreme desire that the bondage should be one of silken cords, rather than one of weary chains, seems to produce in the human mind, a sort of perverse determination to bear, whatever must be borne, as badly as we can.

That the prospect of having to combat with any trial of temper but for a very limited space of time, has a peculiar effect in rendering it more tolerable, we have sufficient proof in the conduct of hired nurses, who, perhaps, of all human beings, have the most to put up with in the way of provocations of this kind. It cannot be supposed that persons of this description possess any peculiar advantages in the way of mental discipline, to give them this power of self-command; nor is it a question of self-interest, for of all persons, that would be most likely to operate upon the wife; neither have they time or opportunity, in the majority of cases, for attaching themselves by any feelings of affection to the objects of their care. It is the simple fact that all will soon be over, and that to them it is ultimately of no sort of consequence, which enables them to bear with such amazing equanimity the trials of patience to which they are so frequently subjected; while, on the

other hand, the consideration that it must be thus, and thus always, appears at once to excite a spirit of resistance where resistance is most vain.

But granting that there is, inherent in the human mind, this spirit of contradiction, and granting also that men, with all their dignified and noble attributes, are sometimes, though often unconsciously, indescribably provoking to an irritable temperament; there is one consideration which a generous mind will be ever willing to dwell upon with so much candor, as at least to make concessions when it has been betrayed into any excess of irritability, if not wholly to submit with cheerfulness and resignation to this peculiar dispensation, regarding it as among the appointments of Providence, designed for purposes inscrutable perhaps to human reason, yet not the less in accordance with mercy, and with wisdom.

But in order to judge more candidly on this subject, let us single out a few instances of the most familiar kind on both sides; and if the merit of unconsciousness, and absence of design, does not preponderate on the side of man, I shall be much mistaken in my calculations.

I have always been accustomed to consider it as the severest trial to the temper of a married woman, to have an idle husband; and if in addition to neglecting his business, or such manly occupations as an exemption from the necessities of business would leave him at liberty to pursue, he is personally idle, sitting slipshod at noontime, with his feet upon the fender, occasionally jarring together the whole army of fire-irons with one stroke of his foot, agitated at intervals by the mere muscular irritation of having nothing to do, or not choosing to do any thing; and if he should happen to have chosen for his wife a woman of active bustling character, as such men not unfrequently do, I believe I must, as in some other instances, leave it to the reader to suggest some possible means by which such a woman may at all times control her temper, and keep the peace at her own fire-side.

One thing, however, is certain in such a case—it is not by ebullitions of momentary indignation that an idle man can be stimulated into action. So far from it, he will rather be made worse, and rendered more obstinately idle by any direct opposition to the indulgence of his personal inclinations. Whatever good is to be done in such a case, can only be effected from the convictions of his own mind, brought about by the quiet operation of affectionate and judicious reasoning; for if the wife should be unguarded enough to throw out reproaches against him, representing the disgusting nature of idleness in its true colors; or if she should seek to establish her own claims to his exertions, so as to convey an idea of her arguments tending to a selfish end, she might as well

“—go kindle fire with snow,”

as attempt to rouse her husband into healthy and consistent habits of activity by such means.

Here, too, we might mention as pre-eminent among the trials of married life, though I question whether it operates so immediately upon the temper as some others, the ruinous propensity inherent in the nature of some men, to spend their own money, and sometimes the money of their friends, in vague speculations and visionary schemes.

The man who is possessed with this mania, for in certain cases it deserves no other name, is neither to be convinced by argument nor experience, that after ninety-nine failures, he is not very likely to succeed the hundredth time; and the wife who knows that the maintenance of herself and her family is entirely dependent upon him, has abundant need for supplies of strength and patience beyond what any earthly source can afford.

Among other causes of irritation, and forming reasonable ground of complaint, is the disposition evinced by some men to be inconsiderate and cruel to animals; and this I must think, is one of the cases in which we are recommended to *be angry, and sin not*. Yet even in this instance, when we look at the education of boys—and consider the absence there is of all regard to the feelings of

animals, even in the minds of the most delicate females, except where early instruction has given to this regard the force of principle—great and charitable allowance ought to be made for the conduct of men in this respect: and perhaps the best and only means of remedying the evil, which any woman can adopt, is to bring up her children, if she be a mother, with higher and more enlightened views of the requirements of Christian duty.

It is a well-known fact, that men in general appear to consider themselves justly entitled to the privilege of being out of humor about their food. Thus the whole pleasure of a social meal is sometimes destroyed by some trifling error in the culinary department, or the non-appearance of some expected indulgence. But here again, our forbearance is called into exercise, by remembering the probability there is, that such men have had silly mothers, who made the pleasures of their childhood to consist chiefly of such as belong to the palate; and here too, if the wife cannot remedy this evil, and in all probability it will be beyond her power to do so, she may, by her judicious efforts to promote the welfare of the rising generation, impart to the youthful minds committed to her care, or subject to her influence, a juster estimate of what belongs to the true enjoyment of intellectual and immortal beings.

With all occasions of domestic derangement, such as washing days, and other renovations of comfort and order, some men of irritable temperament wage open and determined war. But, may we not ask, in connection with this subject, whether their prejudices against these household movements have not been remotely or immediately excited, by the extreme and unnecessary confusion and disturbance with which they are too frequently accompanied? For I cannot think that a reasonable man, on comparing an English home with a French one, for instance, would desire to be altogether exempt from such domestic purifications; and if properly managed, so as to interfere as little as possible with his personal comfort, and conducted with general cheerfulness and

good humor, such a man might easily be brought to consider them as necessary to the good of his household, as the refreshing shower is to the summer soil.

A causeless and habitual neglect of punctuality on the part of the master of a house, is certainly a grievance very difficult to bear; because as he is the principal person in the household, and the first to be considered, the whole machinery of domestic management must necessarily be dependent upon his movements; and more especially, since it so happens, that persons who are the most accustomed to keep others waiting, have the least patience to wait for others. Thus it not unfrequently occurs, that a wife is all day urging on her servants to a punctual attention to the dinner-hour appointed by her husband, and when that hour arrives, he has either forgotten it himself, or he allows some trifling hindrance to prevent his returning home until one, or perhaps two, hours later. Yet the same man, though in the habit of doing this day after day, will be excessively annoyed, if for once in his life he should be punctual to the appointed time, and not find all things ready on his return.

Perhaps too the master of a family, on days of household bustle, when extra business has to be done, will not choose to rise so early as usual; or he will sit reading the newspaper while his breakfast waits, and thus keep every member of his family standing about unoccupied, with all the business of the day before them. Or, he may be one of those who like that women should be always ready long before the necessary time, and thus habitually name an hour for meeting, or setting out from home, at which he has not the remotest intention of being ready himself.

Now, as the time of women, if properly employed, is too precious to be wasted, something surely may be done, not by endeavoring to overrule the movements of such a man so as to make him true to his own appointment, but by convincing him, that common honesty requires him simply to state the actual time at which he does intend to

be ready. And here we see at once, one of those numerous instances in which a reasonable man will listen, and endeavor to amend; while an unreasonable man will either not listen, or not take the slightest pains to improve.

Again, there are men who like the importance, and the feeling of power and decision which it gives them, to set out on a journey as if upon the spur of the moment, without having communicated their intentions even to the wife, who is most interested in making preparations for such a movement. And there are others, who when consulted about any thing, cannot be brought to give either their attention or their advice, so as to assist the judgment of a wife, who would gladly give satisfaction if she could; yet when the time to act upon their advice is past, will bestow their attention a little too severely upon the unfortunate being, who, consulting her own judgment as the only guide she had, will most probably have done exactly what they did not wish.

But it would be an endless task, to go on enumerating instances of this description. I have merely mentioned these as specimens of the *kind* of daily and hourly trials which most women have to expect in the married state; and which, as I have before stated, may be greatly softened down, if not entirely reconciled, by the consideration already alluded to. Besides which, it is but candid to allow, that the greater proportion of these offences against temper and patience, originate in one of those peculiarities in the character of man which I have omitted to mention in its proper place. I mean the incapability under which he labors, of placing himself in idea in the situation of another person, so as to identify his feelings with theirs, and thus to enter into what they suffer and enjoy, as if the feeling were his own.

This capability appears to be peculiarly a feminine one, and it exists among women in so high a degree, as to leave them little excuse if they irritate or give offence to others; because this innate power which they possess of identifying themselves for the moment

with another nature, might, if they would use it for such a purpose, enable them not so much to know, as to feel, when they were giving pain, or awakening displeasure. Men, as I have just stated, are comparatively destitute of this power, as well as of that of sympathy, to which it is so nearly allied. When, therefore, they appear to women so perverse, and are consequently so difficult to bear with, it is often from their being wholly unconscious of the actual state of the case; of the long entanglement of inconveniences which their thoughtless ways are weaving; and consequently of the wounded feeling, disappointment, and vexation, which such thoughtlessness not unfrequently inflicts upon the weaker mind of woman, when the whole framework of her daily existence must be regulated by the movements of a husband who thinks of "none of these things."

But we have not yet sufficiently examined that one consideration, which ever remains to be weighed in the balance against the trials of patience arising out of the conduct of men. And here we must first ask—have you yourself no personal peculiarities exactly opposed to your husband's notions of what is agreeable?—such as habits of disorder, dressing in bad taste, or any other of those minor deviations from delicacy or good breeding, which he might not have had an opportunity of observing before marriage?

We all know that in men these peculiarities are of little importance, compared with what they are in the other sex. If, therefore, you offend in these things, you run imminent risk of impairing, by a succession of little annoyances, the warmth and the intensity of your husband's affection; for man's love, it must ever be remembered, is far more dependent than that of woman, upon having the taste and the fancy always pleased, and consequently upon reposing with perfect complacency on the object of its regard. Have we not all, then, abundant cause to be grateful for being borne with in our infirmities, and loved in spite of our personal defects?

But if such peculiarities as these are of

sufficient importance to cast a shadow over the sunny spots of life, what must we say of some others occasionally observable in the character and conduct of women, to which it is scarcely possible that much charity should be extended? And here I would ask, if you have never treasured up against your husband, some standing cause of complaint, to be thrown at him when an opportunity is offered by the presence of a friend, or a stranger, for discharging this weapon from the household quiver with perfect safety to yourself? Have you not upon the whole preferred having such grievances to complain of, rather than taking such peaceable and judicious measures as would be likely effectually to accomplish their removal?

Have you never, in addition to this, refused an offer of personal gratification when it was convenient or agreeable for your husband to indulge you with it; and professed a somewhat exaggerated desire to accept of it, when the thing was impossible, or at least extremely difficult for your husband to grant?

Have you never made the most of household troubles, spread forth the appurtenances of a wash, allowed the affairs of the kitchen to extend themselves to the parlor, complained unnecessarily of servants and work-people, and appeared altogether in your own person more harassed, exhausted, and forlorn, after your husband's return home, than you did before, on purpose that he might be compelled, not only to pity you, but to bear a portion of your domestic discomfort himself?

When a concatenation of cross occurrences, hindrances, or mistakes, have rendered every moment one of perplexity and haste; have you never, when involved with your husband in such circumstances, added fuel to the fire by your own petulance, or by your still more provoking exclamations of triumph, that you "thought it would come to that?" Or, when your husband has returned at an hour considerably later than he had appointed, have you never begun with breathless haste to remonstrate with him,

and even allowed your remonstrances to extend to reproaches, before you gave him time to vindicate himself, or to say whether he had not in reality been unavoidably detained?

Now, it is impossible for any woman of right feelings to hide from her conscience, that if she chooses to marry, she places herself under a moral obligation to make her husband's home as pleasant to him as she can. Instead, therefore, of behaving as if it was the great business of married life to complain, it is her peculiar duty as a wife, and one for which, by her natural constitution, she is especially fitted, to make all her domestic concerns appear before her husband to the very best advantage. She has time for her troubles and turmoils, if such things must necessarily be, a fact which I am a little disposed to question, when her husband is absent, or when she is engaged exclusively in her own department; and if she would make his home what it ought to be to him—"an ever-sunny place," she will studiously shield him, as with the wings of love, from the possibility of feeling that his domestic annoyances give weight and poignancy to those more trying perplexities, which most men, engaged either in business, or in public affairs, find more than sufficient for their peace of mind.

By those who write on the subject of temper in connection with the happiness of married life, much is generally said by way of giving weight to the importance of guarding against the *first* angry word. But though it is unquestionably most desirable to keep the tablet of experience as long unsullied as we can, I do not see exactly how this rule applies more to offences of temper, than to any other transgressions of the law of perfect love; for if it be felt, as it must be, a breach of this law to utter an unkind expression; it is equally so to allow any evidence to appear of a disposition to act counter to a husband's wishes, or even to forget or neglect what he considers essential to his comfort.

Indeed, so various are the circumstances to which any remarks upon the subject of temper must apply, that the best possible plan

which could be proposed for maintaining harmony and good feeling in one instance, might be the worst in another. As a case in point, there are unquestionably some individuals so constituted, that if in a moment of irritation, they do not speak out, the smothered feeling forcibly pent up, assumes with them the character of sullenness, and even approaches to that of dislike towards the offender. Besides which, we should never know when we did offend, and might consequently go on to the end of life inflicting perpetual annoyance upon our fellow-creatures, if there were no outward evidence of the degree of displeasure which our inadvertences were causing.

Not that I would by any means be guilty of recommending an approach to those violent outpourings of heated and impassioned feeling, which mark out some of the darkest passages of human life, by the remembrance, never to be obliterated, of angry and cruel expressions not possible to be often repeated without destroying the tenderness, and even the very life, of love. What I would say on the other side of the question, is simply this—that in reference to temper, no general rule can be laid down, scarcely can any human aid be called in, because of the diversity of dispositions upon which the influence of temper operates, and the difficulty to mere human reason of discovering exactly what is best for every case. In this, as in every other instance of human frailty, it is the power of religion upon the heart and conduct, which alone can afford any lasting or effectual help.

And after all, as the subject bears upon the affection of human beings one towards another, with creatures frail as we are, and in a state of existence so imperfect as the present, it is not by an exemption from all offences that the purity or the strength of human love can be maintained; but far more so by mutual forgiveness, by sympathy with each other's infirmities, and by the constant exercise of that charity which *thinketh no evil, and which suffereth long, and is kind.*

But leaving all further consideration of the trials of temper, as a subject which from its

endless variety might rather be made to fill volumes than pages; we must turn to subjects of a more serious and alarming nature, and among these, it cannot be out of place to speak first of the deterioration of a husband's character, as taking precedence of other trials incident to married life.

I have already said there can be no calamity in the vast catalogue of human miseries, at all comparable to watching the gradual extinction of that guiding light from the moral influence of a husband, to which a wife might reasonably be allowed to look for her greatest earthly encouragement in every effort to adhere to the dictates of duty, or the requirements of Christian principle. Here, then, it becomes most important to inquire, what can be done to stem the tide of evil, before it shall have borne away the whole fabric of domestic happiness.

A true-hearted woman, herself impressed with the importance of moral and religious principle, will ever be most studious of her husband's safety in this respect; and if her own character, and her own example, are such as to give weight to her remonstrances, there is no calculating the degree to which her influence may not extend. Women, too, are often remarkably quick-sighted to the minor shades of good and evil; and they are thus sometimes enabled to detect a lurking tendency to what is wrong, before the mind of man is awakened to suspicion. Even in business, then, and in all affairs in which men are most liable to be deluded by self-interest, and by the prevailing customs of the world, and thus are too frequently betrayed into transactions at variance with the spirit, if not with the letter, of the law of just and honorable dealing; a right-minded woman may sometimes so place before her husband the affair in which he is engaged, as to make him see at once the error into which he might have fallen; and having seen this clearly, she may possibly enjoy the satisfaction of beholding him adopt, throughout his intercourse with others, a more strict and equitable rule of action.

As this subject, however, in its highest and

most serious import, belongs more properly to a subsequent chapter, we will consider more especially two particular defects in the moral character of men, which may be truly said, wherever they exist, to constitute the severest and most painful trials of married life.

The first of these is intemperance; and here I am aware that my own views on this subject are scarcely such as ought to occupy a place in this work; not because I could not earnestly recommend them to the adoption of every English wife, but because, to do them ample justice, I should be compelled to fill a volume.

Intemperance, then, to treat it as a common vice, should, like every other evil tendency, be watched in its commencement; and here the eye of a conscientious and devoted wife will be far better able to detect the mischief, than his, who, perhaps, in the secret of his heart, would rather not behold it even if he could. I believe there is no difficulty to a delicate-minded person, equal to that of warning a beloved friend or relative of his danger in this respect, else why do we see so many hundreds—nay, thousands looking on, and not stretching out a helping hand until it is too late?

The fact is, that if impressed in any common measure with a sense of justice or of generosity, we cannot do it, so long as we ourselves pursue the same course, only not exactly to the same extent. We cannot look into the face of a familiar friend, and say—“If you take one glass more, you will be guilty of a vulgar and degrading sin; while I, by taking one glass less, commit no sin at all.” And it must come to this, where it is the degree, and not the act itself, which constitutes the evil. It must come to the smallest possible measurement, to mark that minute, and ever shifting line, which separates an act allowed and sanctioned by the wise and good, from one which stamps a human being with infamy in this world, and deprives him of all title to admission into the blessedness of the world to come.

Leaving it then to women whose hearts

might have animated the wives of Sparta, if the absence of all sympathy and tenderness for the weak in their weak points, may rank among the characteristics of those heroines of the past—leaving it to such women to sit down every day to an indulgence, which in a mere trifle of extent beyond their own measure of gratification, they would deny to a husband—I must candidly confess, that I am wholly at a loss to know what to advise, should that husband, advancing a little and a little further by imperceptible degrees, at last exceed the bounds of strict propriety, and finally hasten on towards the “drunkard’s grave.”

It is said again and again of such men, that they ought to stop in time; but which is the time? It may vary according to the state of their own health, as well as with the nature of the refreshment of which they partake; while with no two individuals will it ever be found exactly the same. Besides which, it must always be remembered, that the right time to stop, is the time when the intemperate man least wishes to do so; because in exact proportion to his danger, has been his inability to perceive it, and his increase of inclination to go onward towards excess.

Tell me then, ye wise and potent reasoners on this subject, who hold yourselves above the vulgar error of believing that total abstinence is the only safe and efficient means of rescuing the tempted man from ruin,—tell me, or rather tell the afflicted wife, what I am utterly unequal to, by what means she is to conquer, or even to restrain, the habit of intemperance in her husband, except by inducing him altogether to abstain, and by abstaining altogether herself.

One remark, however, may not be inappropriate here, as it applies equally to the point of view in which the subject has so long been held by the world in general, and to that in which it is the happier privilege of some in the present day to behold it. I mean that a husband should never be made the subject of reproach for transgressions of this nature. If he be a man of feeling, his spirit will be sufficiently wounded by a sense of his own

degradation ; and if not, he will only be hardened by such treatment, and driven, as a means of revenging himself, into still greater excess.

Indeed, nothing but the utmost delicacy, forbearance, and gentleness, will ever be found to answer in such a case ; and whatever means are employed, they must be confined in their operation to seasons of perfect sanity, and especially reserved for those occasions of fitful penitence, which often succeed to the most extravagant indulgence ; when, partly from the weakness of an exhausted frame, and partly from the satiety of inclination, the victim of intemperance will sometimes throw open his heart to a confidential friend, whose kind and judicious treatment of him at such times, may not improbably be rendered conducive to his ultimate recovery.

Here, too, much may be done by making his home all that it ought to be to a husband, by receiving him on his return with cordial smiles, by amusing him with pleasant conversation, but, more than all, by exercising over him, in a mild and prudent manner, that influence which it is the high privilege of a loved and trusted wife to attain.

Could all women who encourage their husbands in the commencement of intemperance, not only by smiling with evident satisfaction at any extraordinary proofs of good humor or excitement as they begin to appear, but beyond this, and far more effectually, by their own example—could all such women “look to the end,” and see the bitter fruits of this trifling with the serious indications of a growing evil, they would stand appalled at the magnitude of their own sufferings, in having to watch from day to day, through their future lives, the gradual extinction of all they had ever loved in the being to whom they must still be united. They would see then how the very countenance may lose its beauty, and like some hideous form that grows upon us in a feverish dream, assume first one aspect of distortion, and then another, until all trace becomes extinct of the “divinity” that stirred “within.” They would see then

what an awful wreck is that presented by a lost and polluted mind ; and they would feel, in all its reality, what it is to be desolate and alone. For the woman thus circumstanced must not complain. She must not ask for sympathy, for that would be to expose the folly and disgrace of him, about whom her hopes still linger ; over whose degraded brow she would still fondly spread the soft shadow of her tenderness, that no ray of piercing light might reach it, to render more conspicuous its deformity and its shame. No ; she can only lock her griefs within her own bosom, and be still.

It must be from ignorance, for the phenomenon is not to be accounted for in any other way than on the ground of ignorance of what is to be found in human life, as well as what is the capability of the human heart for suffering and enjoying, which leads so many kindly-disposed and well-intentioned women into such culpable neglect of points connected with this important subject.

One would willingly believe it was because they had never, even in idea, realized what it must be to live through one long night of anxious expectation, when the crisis of a husband's fate had come, and when that single night would decide whether he had sufficient mastery over himself to resist, or whether he would allow his inclination to lead him for the last time over the barrier, and finally to plunge himself and his helpless family into irremediable wretchedness and ruin.

It is in such seasons as these, that every moment is indeed an age, and every pulse like an advancing or receding wave, which falls with heavy swell upon the shore of life. And then what sharpening of the outward senses !—what quickening of the ear to distant sounds, giving to that which lives not a vitality, until the very step is heard, and then—another wave of the fast-ebbing tide, and all is gone, and all is silent as before. The eye, too, though dim with tears, and wearied out with watching, what does it not behold !—creating out of “strange combinations” of familiar things, some sudden and unexpected

evidence that he has returned ! Yes, already come ! Then follows an instantaneous flash of self-reproach for having judged him with too little kindness. But, no ; the vision fades away, and with it sinks the heart of the too credulous believer.

And if such be the quickening of the outward senses, what must be that of the different faculties of the mind ?—of memory, whose cruel task it is through those long weary hours, to paint the smiling past, to make it live again with such intensity of loveliness, that while no actual form intrudes, nor actual sound breaks through the chain of thought, the phantasy grows real ; and old impressions wake again, and voices speak so kindly, and cordial looks, and gentle loving acts, are interchanged, and pure soft feelings towards each other, as in those early days when the sweet “trysting time” was kept, and hope made light of expectation. Oh, agony ! It is a dream—a very dream. Nay, worse—the vision of the sleeper may return ; but this can never—never live again.

There is no credulity like that of love. However dark may be the fear which alternates with hope in the mind of her who is thus situated, she has, under all, and supporting her through all the deep foundation of her own unchanging love—that love which is *strong as death*. And by the same comprehensive rule, which to her includes in one close union every faculty and feeling of her soul—by this rule she judges of her husband, and calculates the probability of his return. By this rule it is impossible that he should forget her prayers, and her entreaties, her sorrow, her suffering, and her tears. By this rule, then, he must of necessity remember her in that gay circle, even when its mirth and its revelry are at their height. She has wronged him—deeply wronged him, to think he could forget. Another hour will find him by her side, repaying, Oh, how richly ! all her anxious fears.

With these sweet thoughts, she rises and trims her fire again, and draws her husband’s chair beside the hearth, bethinking her, with

joyous recollection, of some other little acts of kindness by which she may possibly be able to make his home look more attractive. But still he comes not ; and that strange sickness of the heart begins again, and creeps along her frame, until her very fingers ache with anguish ; and tremblingly her hands are clasped together, and were it not for prayer, her heart would surely break with its strong agony ; for still he comes not. Yet,—slowly as the heavy hours drag on, the midnight chime at last is heard, that solemn peal, which tells to some its tale of peace, of safety, and of home ; while it speaks to others but of darkness, desolation, and despair.

But who shall fill from one sad moment to another the page of busy thought, or paint the ever-shifting scenes which flit before the lonely watcher’s mind ? Another hour, and still he comes not.—Yet hark ! It is his step—She flies to meet him—Let us close a scene for which earth holds no parallel ; for here are mingled, horror, shame, repulsion and contempt, with a soft tenderness like that of some sad mother for her idiot child—joy that the shrouding wings of love once more can shelter him—bliss that no other eye but hers is there to see—kind yearning thoughts of care to keep him in his helplessness from every touch of harm—feelings so gentle, yet so powerful, of a strange gladness to be near him in his degradation—to press the hand which no one else in the wide world would hold—to kiss the brow which has no trace of beauty left ! And to do this, night after night—to live through all the changes of this scene, through months and years, only with less of hope, and more of anguish and despair !

Such is the picture not exaggerated, for that would be impossible, of one short portion in the experience of how many women ! We cannot number them. They are to be met with in society of every grade, and yet society for the most part can rest satisfied to do nothing more than pity them. Nor scarcely that ; for the same voice which speaks with feeble lamentations of the suffering of the wife, will often press the husband to the fes-

tive board, and praise the sparkling wine, and urge him to partake.

But it is time to turn our attention to the contemplation of another of the trials of married life, of which it is to be hoped that few who read these pages, will have any cause to think with reference to themselves. It may be said, "Why then remind them of the possibility that such causes of trial may, or do, exist?" I answer, that although the extreme of the case to which I am about to allude, is, happily for us, comparatively seldom known among respectable families in the middle ranks of life in England; yet, there are degrees of proximity to these extremes, existing sometimes where we should least expect to find the cheerful aspect of domestic life cast under such a cloud.

In reflecting seriously and impartially upon the love of married life, we must all be forcibly impressed with the fact, that the love which is most frequently presented to the notice of the observer, is far from being such as we ourselves should be satisfied to possess; or, at all events, not such as women of deep and sensitive feelings would expect to meet with in the married state. It is true, there are instances, and they can scarcely be dwelt upon with too much admiration, where the love of married life, in all its imperishable beauty, outlives the bloom of youth, and sheds a radiance like the sunset glow of evening, around the peaceful passage of old age towards the tomb. And were it not that in such instances, we see the possibility of earthly love being kept in all its vigor and its freshness, uninjured by the lapse of time, it would be useless to follow up the inquiry every married woman ought to make—by what means is this love to be preserved?

If in speaking of the peculiar trial about to occupy our attention, I use the word unfaithfulness, to signify my meaning, it is less in reference to those extremes of moral delinquency which sometimes stain the history of private, as well as public life, than to those slighter shades of the same character, which more frequently flit across the surface of domestic peace; or, what is still more lament-

able, remain to cloud the atmosphere of home-enjoyment, until the whole experience of married life becomes as dull, and soulless, and devoid of interest, as if the union was simply one of habit or convenience, endured with mutual indifference, yet dragged on with decency and something like respect, because it was "so nominated in the bond."

But is it right that creatures endowed with capabilities for the highest and holiest enjoyment, should be satisfied with this? Nay, is it possible that happiness of so low a grade, if one may call it such, can fill the heart whose quick susceptibilities, whose trembling emotions, and whose living depths, have been formed to answer, and to echo every touch and tone of feeling, from the highest thrill of ecstasy, down to the lowest notes of woe? No: if we are reckless how we turn from its high destiny, a nature thus endowed; if we will thus sink the immortal in the material, so as merely to work out with mechanical precision the business of each day, in which the animal nature holds pre-eminence over the spiritual, we must not venture to complain that life is vapid and monotonous, or that there is little in this world to remind us of that blessedness which is promised as the portion of the happy in the next.

Whatever we aim to possess as a privilege even in this life, let it then be of the highest order; and having attained our wish, let us seek to preserve that privilege unimpaired. That which elevates the soul in its capability of enjoyment, is always worthy of our care; while that which lowers it, is always to be shunned and feared. In nothing is this more important to be observed, than in the preservation of earthly love. That which degrades the standard of affection, degrades the whole being; and that which raises this standard, raises also every faculty which can be connected either immediately or remotely with the exercise of the affections.

I have already described, in some particulars, how that best gift of Providence, the love of a faithful and devoted husband, is to be preserved. We have now the painful task of supposing that it has been allowed,

by some means or other, to fall away. There are faint and frequent symptoms of this decline, of which the judgment takes no cognizance, until after the heart has been made to feel them; and although I have already alluded to the folly and the danger of voluntarily looking out for such symptoms where there is no reason to suppose they exist, there may be equal, if not greater danger, in disregarding them where they do.

I will only mention as the first of these symptoms, an increased tendency on the part of the husband to be repelled or annoyed by little personal peculiarities. And here it may be observed, that almost every impression injurious to the love of man in married life, is personal or immediate, rather than remote. Thus a husband will more easily forgive his wife for an act of moral culpability, provided it has no reference to himself, than for the least personal affront, or the slightest occasion for even a momentary sensation of disgust. It consequently happens, that when affection begins to wane, the husband often becomes annoyed with the voice, the manner, the dress of his wife, more than he is with those of other women. She has, then, some peculiar way of doing every thing which seems to jar upon his senses; and in time he ceases so entirely to look, to listen, or to linger near her, that unless more than commonly obtuse, she must be made to feel that she has lost her power to charm him, and when that is lost—alas, for the poor wife!

Still we must not forget, that there are two kinds of unfaithfulness, the one arising entirely from estranged affection; and the other from attraction towards a different object. In the latter case it does not always follow that affection for the wife shall have become extinct, and therefore there is hope; but, in the former, the fact that man's love when once destroyed is destroyed forever, excludes all possibility of consolation, except from a higher and a surer source. As well might the mourner weeping for the dead, expect by tears and lamentations to reanimate the lifeless form; as the unloved wife to recall the affection of her husband, after the bloom and

tenderness of his love is gone. Who then would incur the risk of so vast and irreparable a loss, by a neglect of those personal attractions by which it was her study in early life to charm? Who would allow a careless or negligent demeanor to impress her husband's mind with the conviction, that he was not in her estimation of sufficient importance to make it worth her while to please? or who would be willing that the powers of her mind should fall into disuse, when they might in their happiest and yet most natural exercise, be made conducive to the one great end of increasing her husband's interest in his home?

To feel herself an unequal companion to the being whom of all others she would most wish to please, to have never cultivated her powers of conversation, and to be conscious that her society is vapid and uninteresting, must be one of the most painful and humiliating feelings to which an amiable woman can be subject: but to see, what is very natural in such a case, that others have a power which she has not, to call forth the higher faculties of her husband's mind, to elevate his thoughts, to charm his fancy, and to enliven his spirits!—Surely if the daughters of England could realize by any exercise of their imagination, the full intensity of feelings such as these, they would cease to be careless about the cultivation of those means of promoting social and domestic happiness, with which every woman who enters upon the duties of a wife, ought to make herself acquainted.

But beyond this vague and general feeling of being neglected, and this incapacity for doing any thing to avert so desolate a doom, it sometimes happens that there is real cause to suspect a transfer of the husband's interest and affection to another. And although nothing can be more destructive to the happiness of married life, or more at variance with the nature of true and deep affection, than a predisposition to suspicion on these points; yet where the case is too evident to admit of doubt, it would evince a culpable indifference in the wife who could suffer it to remain unnoticed.

Here, however, if ever in the whole range of human experience, it is necessary to act with delicacy and caution. It is necessary, in the first place, to be sure. In the next, no selfish motive, no indignant feeling, no disposition to revenge, must mingle with what is said or done on so melancholy and momentous an occasion; for though the dignity of virtue, and the purity of the female character, as well as the temporal and eternal good of the offender, alike require that some decided measures should be adopted to avert the evil; the wife herself must not forget, that under such circumstances she possesses no other than a legal claim—that, as a being to be cherished and beloved, she is utterly discarded from her husband's heart—that scarcely is his home her own—that her respectability, her position in society, all that in which an honored and a trusted wife delights, are only nominally hers; and that she is in reality, or rather, in all which belongs to the true feelings of a woman, a low, lost thing, more lonely, pitiable, and degraded, than the veriest outcast from society who still retains a hold upon her husband's love. What, then, are admiration, wealth, or fame, to such a woman? Society, even though she were its idol, would have no power to flatter her; nor could the wide world, with all its congregated millions, awake within her desolate bosom a single thrill of pride. No, there is nothing but uncomplaining loneliness, and utter self-abasement, for the portion of that wife who cannot keep her husband's heart!

It is in this spirit alone, that with any propriety or any hope, she can appeal to a husband's feelings, carefully guarding against all expression of tenderness, no longer welcome or desired; and keeping, as it were, aloof in her humility; yet withal, casting herself upon his pity, as one who is struck down by a beloved hand, will kiss the instrument of her abasement; putting aside all selfish claims, as indeed she must; and making it evident, that though her own happiness is wrecked for ever, she cannot live without a hope, nor breathe without a prayer, for him.

And surely, if all this is carried out to the full extent of woman's delicacy, disinterestedness, and truth; and if accompanied by earnest and unceasing prayer for that help which no human power can then afford—surely, towards a wife thus suffering and sincere, the husband whose heart is not yet wholly depraved, could scarcely withhold his pity, his protection, and his love!

And if the husband should relent, if he should renounce the object of attraction to his wandering fancy, though nothing can obliterate the past, or break the chain of association between that and the thousand apprehensions which must of necessity link themselves into the sad future; all these dark thoughts must be concealed within her bosom, into whose secret counsels, and more secret griefs, no earthly friend must be admitted. Neither must sadness cloud her brow, nor any lurking suspicion betray itself upon the smooth surface of her after-life, but vivacity and cheerfulness again must charm; while a manner disengaged, and a mind at liberty to please, and receive pleasure in return, must prove the mastery of principle over impulse—of affection over self.

If with a wife thus circumstanced, the power to forget should appear the greatest mercy a kind Providence could bestow; and if this mercy being denied, the aspect of her life should look too dark to be endured, she must not forget that one earthly consolation yet remains—it is that of having kept her own affection unchanged and true: and oh! how infinitely preferable is the feeling of having borne unfaithfulness, than of having been unfaithful ourselves!

But beyond, and far above such consolation, is that of being remembered in her lost and low estate, by Him who *chasteneth whom he loveth*; of being permitted in her degradation to come and offer up her broken heart to Him; when deprived of every other stay, to call Him father, and to ask in humble faith the fulfilment of His gracious promise of protection to those who put their trust in Him.

CHAPTER VIII.

POSITION IN SOCIETY.

IN a previous work, addressed to the "Daughters of England," I have proposed as the first serious inquiry of a thinking mind, that all young persons entering upon the active duties of life, should ask this question—what is my actual position? And if in the season of early youth this question is important, it is equally, if not more so, immediately after marriage, especially as the position of a woman must always depend upon that of her husband, where society is so constituted that a man may raise or lower his wife, though no woman, except in very peculiar cases, can effect any material alteration in the rank or station of her husband.

Thus it is highly important, in taking upon herself the duties of a new home, that the wife should ascertain precisely what is her position with regard to those with whom she associates; for there is as great a deviation from good sense, integrity, and right feeling, in being servile to the great, as in being haughty to the poor.

But it is impossible to enter upon this subject, without being afresh reminded of one of those inconsistencies which mark the general tone of feeling and habit in society of the middle ranks in England. I mean a striking inequality between the degree of refinement, self-indulgence, and luxury, existing among men, and that which is generally found among women of the same rank. In families whose dependance is entirely upon business, this is especially the case, at least in our large towns and cities; for, while the sons are sent out at an early age, to engage in all the drudgery of the shop or the warehouse, the daughters remain at home, not unfrequently the occupants of elegant drawing-rooms, with little else to do than practise their music lessons, manufacture their wax-flowers, or pursue, according to the popular notions of the day, those various and infallible methods of renovating a feeble constitution, which, in nine cases out of ten, in reality wants nothing more than a little wholesome

activity to render it as strong as either happiness or usefulness require.

Now, though it is far from the wish of the writer to wage war against any of those ingenious occupations which fill up the spare time of young ladies in general, provided such occupations are kept in their proper place, and made to fill up *spare* time only; yet, against the morbid feelings both of mind and body, which are engendered by a life of mere trifling, all who wish well to the sex, both in this and other countries, must feel it a sacred duty to use such influence as they possess.

It is, however, the foolish pride, and the false notions of what is, or is not, becoming, naturally arising out of the state of existence to which our young *ladies* of the middle class of society in England are consigned, which, more than any thing else, interfere with their happiness, and prevent their being in reality either a help, or a comfort, to the companions whose lot they are bound to share for life.

England as a nation has little to boast of beyond her intellectual and her moral power. It is in this that her superiority is felt and acknowledged by the world; and in this it might almost be allowed her to indulge a sort of honest pride. That this power is chiefly lodged with the middle classes, I think all have agreed; and that, originating in them, it is made to operate more extensively through the efficient instrumentality of a comparatively well-ordered and wisely governed population of working people.

What then would England gain individually or collectively, by the middle classes aspiring upwards to imitate the manners, and adopt the customs of the aristocracy? No; let her shopkeepers be shopkeepers still—her farmers, farmers—and the wives and daughters of such honest, manly, and honorable citizens of the world, let them no longer blush to owe the comfort of their homes to the profits of a well-conducted trade.

To say nothing of the want of right submission to the will of Providence, evinced by being foolishly above the situation we are born to; it is in my opinion a sort of rebel-

lion, or rather treachery, against the welfare of our country, to be thus unwilling to maintain, what future ages will agree to have been the glory of the times in which we live.

Besides which, it requires but little knowledge, but little observation of society in other countries, and but little acquaintance with the world in general, to see that those distinctions which give to one occupation so much more dignity than another, must be purely conventional. Let us look, as an instance of this, at the vast difference we make in our notions of gentility between wholesale and retail business. And though a man of noble birth, as he drives by necessity through the bustling streets of London, would smile at the idea that trade was not a degradation of itself sufficient to exclude all notion of degree; yet the tradesman living at his shop knows perfectly well, that his wife and daughters have no right to visit with the wife and daughters of him who keeps his country house, and sells *en masse*, from some dark warehouse in the city, the self-same articles in which the other deals.

Still these distinctions, strongly and clearly as they are occasionally impressed upon the inferior classes, become sometimes a little intricate, as wealth enables its possessor to advance in the scale of luxury and indulgence. When the city shopkeeper, for instance, obtains sufficient to enable him to settle in his rural villa, from whence he issues every morning to his counting-house in town, the wife and daughters who remain to set the fashions of the village where they live—how immeasurably far are they from holding intercourse with any of the shopkeepers there! Even when affairs connected with the welfare of the neighborhood render it necessary to call upon the shopkeeper's wife, they meet her in a manner the most distant, and the most unlike what could by any possibility be construed into friendship.

But in order to see more clearly the perfect absurdity of such distinctions, we have only to make a sudden transition of thought to the state of a new colony, on some uncivilized and distant shore; and ask what differ-

ence any one would think of making there, between the member of that little community who should prepare the skins of wild animals for general use, and him who should manufacture such skins into articles of wearing apparel? or who would pronounce upon the inferiority of occupation in him who should employ himself each day in catering for a single meal, to that of him who should, in a longer space of time, provide for many meals together?

That the man who held the reins of government over such a community, would merit some distinction, I am free to allow, because his situation would be one to which he must have risen either by his own superiority of mind, or by the unanimous consent of the rest, who agreed, at the time they appointed him to the office, to evince towards him the respect which is always due to influence rightly exercised. In the same manner, and according to their different degrees of capability, many of the others would, no doubt, work their way to offices of responsibility and trust, instituted for the good of the whole body, and each entitled to its share of respect and confidence. But that working in one material more than another, handling one article of food or apparel, or even dealing in a large or a small way, with those who buy and sell, should be able to create distinctions of such importance as to separate society into mere fractions, or to invest one party with honor, and cast odium upon the other, is a phenomenon which has been left for the enlightened stage of civilization in which we live, fully to develop, though the march of intellect has hitherto failed to reduce the whole to a system, so as to be understood and acted upon with any degree of certainty and precision.

It may be said, and perhaps with too much truth, that the business of shopkeeping, as it is generally conducted, has little tendency to ennoble the character; and that perpetually striving to please for purposes of self-interest, those who in reality are sometimes cordially despised, is lowering to the dignity of a man, to say nothing of a gentleman.

It may be asked, on the other hand, who, in the present state of society, is exempt from this particular kind of degradation? The lawyer, who may be said almost to hold the destinies of his fellow-creatures in his hand—he cringes to his wealthy client, and often works his way to distinction by concealing his real sentiments, and pretending to be other than he is. The doctor, too, with his untiring patience, and his imperturbable serenity, approaching with apparent kindness and respect, where every feeling of his soul is repelled—who would speak of him as an independent man, more especially in the outset of his career? Nor is this less the case with other professions, all which, however, are esteemed more honorable, and consequently more eligible, than any kind of trade.

But still—

“A man's a man for a' that;”

and let his occupation be what it may, it is the honest heart, the upright principle, the steady mind, and the unbiassed judgment, which give him dignity wherever he may be placed. The man who possesses these qualifications, in addition to a far-stretching and enlightened intellect, must ever be a pillar to the state in which he lives, for he will uphold its integrity, and without such men no nation can be truly great.

As the chosen companion of such a man, is it possible, then, that an English woman born to the same rank in society, should blush to acknowledge herself a tradesman's wife? Nor is this all. It is not the bare acknowledgment that she is so, which can in any way be made to answer the demands of duty, but a perfect willingness to adapt herself in every respect to her situation, so as to answer its various requirements to the satisfaction of all around her. And here the sisters who have been separated so widely from their brothers in the formation of their social and domestic habits, are found so often and so lamentably at fault; not always because they are unwilling to do what duty may require, but because from having early imbibed false notions of what is really honorable, and really degrading, they do their duty, if at all,

in a troubled, fretful, and discontented spirit, as much at variance with what a husband would naturally desire in the companion of his home, as with what ought to be exhibited as the graces of the Christian character.

Yet what can be expected of such wives, for they have their sickly sensibilities arising out of the false position they have held, and for which they have been training; they have the romance engendered by indolence and light reading; they have the love of self, which personal indulgence has strengthened into a habit; they have their delicate constitutions, and their thousand ailments—they have all these to contend with, and all operating powerfully against the cheerful performance of the new duties in which they are involved.

Who can have witnessed the situation of such women in their married state, without longing to awaken the whole sisterhood to a different estimate of duty, and of happiness? Who can have observed their feeble striving after nobler effort, when too late to attain the power of making it to any useful purpose—the spirit broken, the health impaired, the beauty and vivacity of youth all gone; the few accomplishments upon which their time was wasted, forgotten, or remembered only as a dream; the wish without the hope to do better for the future, than has been done for the past, the failing of pecuniary means, resources gradually diminishing in proportion to the increase of demand—sickness, servants, children, and their education, all requiring more and more—who that has ever looked upon all this, and there are not a few among the boasted homes of England where the reality of this picture might be found, would not yearn with aching heart over so lamentable a waste of good feeling and intention, arising solely out of the early, but wrong basis of the female mind with regard to common things?

But let us not despair. Where ignorance and not perverseness constitutes the foundation of any prevailing evil, the whole may easily be remedied. Let us look then again at the constitution of English society, at the

vast proportion of good which is effected by the middle classes, at the mass of intellect it comprehends, at the genius by which it is adorned, at the influence it commands, at the dignity with which it is invested by the state, and last, but not least, at its independence; for if, on the one hand, it claims exemption from the necessary hardships and restrictions of the poor, on the other, it is equally privileged in its exemption from the arbitrary requirements of exalted rank.

It is unquestionably one of the great advantages of being born to this station, that we are comparatively free to think and act for ourselves; that our heritage is one of liberty, with the rational enjoyment of which no one has a right to interfere. We have our intellectual privileges, too, and leisure for the cultivation of the mind; our social meetings, where we dare to speak the honest feelings of the heart, no man being able to make us afraid; our hospitality unshackled by the cold formalities of rank; our homes supplied with every comfort, and it may be, adorned with elegance; our fireside pleasures uninterrupted; our ingatherings of domestic joy sacred to those who dwell beneath the same protecting roof; and no interference with our sentiments, or our religion, but each one left to follow out the purpose of a merciful Creator, by choosing his Bible and his conscience as his only guide.

And what could any reasonable woman wish for more? Or having found herself a member of a community thus constituted, why should she reject its noble privileges, for the sake of any feeble hold she may obtain of such as belong more probably to another, and a higher sphere?

I have already stated, in an earlier portion of this work, that true dignity can only be maintained by adaptation to our circumstances, whatever they may be: thus there can be no dignity in assuming what does not belong to our actual position in society; though many temptations to fall into this error are placed in the way of women in general. When, for instance, the wife of a respectable tradesman is associated with per-

sons of superior rank in the duties of private or public charity, she is frequently treated with a degree of kindness and freedom, which, if not on her guard against the fascinating manners of that class of society, might easily beguile her into the belief that no real difference of rank was felt to exist. But just in proportion as she would herself desire to be affable and kind to those beneath her, without such kindness being presumed upon as an evidence of equality; so it often happens that ladies of rank do really enjoy a certain degree of friendly and social intercourse with women of good sense occupying a lower station, when at the same time they would shrink away repelled by the least symptom of the difference of rank being forgotten by the inferior party.

It is the instinct of natural delicacy then which leads us rather to withdraw our familiarity, than to have it withdrawn from; and if thus sensible of what is her proper sphere, and scrupulous to observe its limits, a right-minded woman need never be made to feel that she is not respected; although the moment she steps beyond the boundary of that sphere, the true dignity of her character will be gone.

Nor is this the case with her position in society alone. All misapprehensions about herself, such as supposing she is beautiful when she is not, or highly gifted when no evidence of talent appears, or important when she has no influence—all these mistakes are calculated to deprive a woman of that dignity which is the inalienable possession of all who fill with perfect propriety their appointed place.

It is scarcely necessary in the present state of society to point out, on the other hand, the loss of character and influence occasioned by living below our station; for if in some individual minds there is an inherent tendency to sink and grovel in their own sphere, or to be servile and cringing to those above them; such a propensity forms so rare an exception to the general character of the times in which we live, as scarcely to need any further comment, more especially as such a disposition

is exposed by its own folly to that contempt which constitutes its proper punishment.

It is, however, deeply to be regretted, that often where this tendency is not inherent, nor consequently a part of individual character, it has in too many instances been induced by the severe and constant pressure of pecuniary difficulties, rendering it an act of necessity, rather than of choice, that the favor of the distinguished or the wealthy should be sought, and their patronage obtained, as the only means of ensuring success, and sometimes as the only hope of preserving a helpless family from want or ruin.

Pitiable as this situation may be, and frequent as there is every reason to fear it is, much may be done in cases of this kind to keep up the moral dignity of a husband and a family, by the influence of a high-principled wife, who will make it the study of her life to prove that it is not in the power of circumstances to degrade an upright and independent mind.

If, then, it is a duty of paramount importance for a wife to ascertain what is her exact position in society, and to endeavor to adapt herself to it wherever it may be; her next duty is to consider well the *manner* of doing this. We can all feel, in the case of our servants and dependents, the vast difference there is between a willing and an unwilling service. How striking then must be this difference, where all the social affections, and the best feelings of the heart, are implicated, as they must be, in the conduct of a wife!

I can think of no more appropriate word by which to describe the manner in which her duties ought to be performed, than the homely phraseology we use, when we speak of things being done *heartily*; for it is precisely in this way that she may most effectually prove to her husband how entirely she considers her destiny, with all its hopes, and all its anxieties, to be identified with his. As a mere matter of policy, too, nothing can be more likely to ensure the happiest results, since whatever we do *heartily*, produces in one sense its own reward, by stimulating in-

to healthy activity the various powers of the mind and body, and thus exciting a degree of energy and cheerfulness, alike calculated to enhance the pleasure of success, or to support under the trial of disappointment. While on the other hand, a shrinking, reluctant, halfish way of falling in with the requirements of duty, by perpetuating the sensation of self-sacrifice, and dragging out each individual effort into a lingering and painful struggle, is not more likely to produce the most unfavorable impression upon the minds of those with whom we are associated, than to weary out our own inclination to do right, at the same time that it effectually destroys our happiness and our peace of mind.

I have thus far, in relation to position in society, spoken only of cases in which the wife may be liable to feel that her situation is a humiliating one, and I have been compelled to do this at some length—from the fact already noticed, of the sisters in families connected with business, being generally so far in advance of their brothers, not only as regards their notions of what is suitable or becoming to themselves, but also the habits they have cultivated of refinement and personal indulgence, as to render it scarcely possible for them to marry in the same sphere of life, without having much to endure before they can enter with full purpose of heart into all the requirements of their new situation.

But if cases of this kind constitute the majority of those which fall under our notice, we must not forget that in English society, it is the privilege of many persons in the middle ranks to be placed in circumstances of affluence and ease, where the luxuries of life, and even its elegances, may properly be enjoyed. And if the first aspect of such a lot should present the idea of greater personal indulgence being its lawful accompaniment; on the other hand, the serious and reflecting mind must be struck with the important fact, that in proportion to more extensive means of enjoyment, must be a wider influence, and a greater amount of responsibility.

To use this influence aright, and to render

to her conscience a strict account of these responsibilities, will be no light undertaking to the English wife ; and as we live, happily for us, in a country where channels are perpetually opened for our benevolence, and opportunities perpetually offered for our efforts to do good, we cannot, if we would, rest satisfied with the plea, that our disposition towards usefulness meets with no field for its development.

It so happens, however, that the same position in society which presents such facilities for the exercise of better feeling, presents also innumerable temptations to the gratification of female vanity, indolence, and self-indulgence, with all the evils which commonly follow in their train. The very title of this chapter—"Position in Society,"—where it conveys an idea of wealth and influence, never fails to conjure up a host of enemies to simple Christian duty, some of which are so deceptive and insidious, as effectually to escape detection, until their magnitude, as plants of evil growth, becomes a cause of just alarm.

The great facility with which the elegances and luxuries of life are now obtained, and the general competition which prevails throughout society with regard to dress, furniture, and style of living, present to a vain and unenlightened woman, an almost irresistible temptation to plunge into that vortex of extravagance, display, and worldly-mindedness, in which, I believe, a greater amount of good intention has been lost, than by the direct assault of enemies apparently more powerful.

Again, the indolence almost necessarily induced by the enjoyment to a great extent of the luxuries of life—how often is this foe to health and cheerfulness dressed up in the cloak of charity, and made to assume the character of kindness to the poor, in offering them employment. Not that I would be guilty of endeavoring to divert from so necessitous a channel the proper exercise of *real* charity ; but at the same time that we advocate the cause of the poor, let us call things by their right names ; and if we employ more servants than are necessary, or

send out our work to be done by those who need the utmost amount of what we give them for doing it, let us not take advantage of this disposition of our affairs, to spend the time which remains upon our hands in idleness ; but let us rather employ, in a higher sphere of usefulness, those faculties of mind, and those advantages of education, the free exercise of which constitutes one of the greatest privileges of an exalted station.

The same temptations which spread the snare of indolence around the feet of the unwary, are equally potent in their power to beguile into habits of self-indulgence. And here the fancied or real delicacy of constitution which seems in the present day to be the birthright of Englishwomen, with all that spectral host of nervous maladies, which so often paralyze their energies, and render nugatory their efforts to do good—here, in this most privileged of all positions of human life, most frequently assail the female frame, so as often to reduce their pitiable victim to a mere nonentity as regards one great end of her existence—usefulness to her fellow-creatures.

Far be it from me to speak with unkindness or want of sympathy of those maladies of mind and body, which, under the general head of nervous disorders, I believe to constitute some of the greatest miseries which "flesh is heir to." But having never found them to exist to any serious extent where constant occupation of head and hand, and heathful bodily exercise, were kept up with vigorous and unremitting effort ; I feel the more anxious that English wives should not create for themselves, out of their habits of personal indulgence, so formidable an enemy to their own enjoyment, and to the beneficial influence which, as Christian women, they are capable of exercising to an almost incalculable extent.

I feel anxious also, that some pictures, too frequently witnessed by us all, should never be realized in their experience—pictures in which a sickly, helpless, desponding wife, forms the centre of a group of neglected children, whose boisterous mirth she is little able to endure, and whose numerous wants,

all unrestrained, remind her every moment, with fresh pain, of her inability to gratify them.

That a woman thus situated, is, under existing circumstances, more to be pitied than blamed, we should be wanting in common feeling to deny; but in comparing her situation with that of a healthy, active, cheerful-spirited wife, prompt to answer every claim, and happy in the discharge of every duty; and when we see how such a woman, merely by the exercise of moral power, and often without the advantages of any extraordinary intellectual gifts, can become the living principle of activity, order, and cheerfulness in her own family, the adviser whom all consult, the comforter to whom all repair, and the support upon whom all depend, happy in herself, and diffusing happiness around her—oh how we long that those dispositions, and those habits, both of mind and body, should be cultivated in early youth, which would be most likely to ensure such blessed results as the experience of riper years!

Much of this habitual cheerfulness, and this willing submission to the requirements of duty, is to be attained by the proper regulation of our aims with regard to common things; but especially by having chosen a right standard of excellence for every thing we do. For want of aiming at the right thing, the whole course of human life, which might be so richly diversified with enjoyment of various kinds, is often converted into a long, fruitless, and wearisome struggle, first to attain a happiness which is never found, and then to escape a misery which too surely pursues its mistaken victim.

The married woman cannot, then, too frequently ask herself, "What is it which constitutes the object of my greatest earthly desire? and at what standard do I really aim?" Nor let us deceive ourselves either in asking or in answering these questions; for if it be essential to integrity that we should be sincere with others, it is no less so that we should be sincere with ourselves.

If, then, we are weak enough to aim at being the centre of a brilliant circle, let us not

pretend that we court notoriety for the purpose of extending our influence, and through that, our means of doing good. If we aim at surpassing our neighbors in the richness of our furniture, the splendor of our entertainments, and the costliness of our dress, let us not deceive ourselves into the belief, that it is for the sake of encouraging the manufactures and the people of our own country. If we aim at taking the lead in affairs of moment, and occupying the first place among those with whom we associate, let us not do this under the plea of being forced into a conspicuous situation against our will, in compliance with the wish of others, and under the fear of giving them offence. Let us, I repeat, be honest with ourselves, for this is our only chance of ever arriving at any satisfactory conclusion, or attaining any desirable end.

And if we would ascertain with certainty what is the actual standard of excellence which in idea we set up for ourselves, for all persons, whether they know it or not, have such a standard, we have only to ascertain to what particular purpose our thoughts and actions most uniformly tend. If the most brilliant and striking characters are those which we consider most enviable, we may easily detect in ourselves a prevailing endeavor, in what we say or do, to produce an impression, and consequently to render ourselves conspicuous, than which, nothing can be more out of keeping with the right position of a married woman, nor more likely to render her, at the summit of her wishes, a mark for envy, and all uncharitableness.

But a far more frequent, and more extensively prevailing standard of excellence, is that which consists in giving the best dinners, exhibiting the most costly furniture, being dressed in the newest fashion, and making every entertainment go off in the most successful manner. How many heads and hearts are made to ache by this ambition, it must be left for the private history of every family to record. What sleepless nights, what days of toil, what torturing anxieties, what envyings, what disputes, what back-

bitings, and what bitter disappointments arise out of this very cause, must be left for the same record to disclose. And if in the opposite scale we would weigh the happiness enjoyed, the good imparted, or the evil overcome by the operation of the same agency, we behold a blank; for let the measure of success be what it may, there is no extreme of excellence to which this ambition leads, but it may be exceeded by a neighbor, or perhaps a friend; and where wealth can purchase all that we aspire to, we must ever be liable to the mortifying chance of being compelled to yield precedence to the ignorant and the vulgar-minded.

Nothing, in fact, can be more vulgar, or more in accordance with the lowest grade of feeling, than an ambition of this kind. Not only is it low in its own nature, but low in all the calculations it requires, in all the faculties it calls into exercise, and in all the associations it draws along with it. Yet, who shall dethrone this monster from its place in the hearts of English wives, where it gives the law to private conduct, levies a tax upon industry, monopolizes pecuniary profit, makes itself the arbiter in cases of difficulty or doubt, rules the destiny of families, and finally gives the tone to public feeling, and consequently the bias to national character?

I ask again, who shall dethrone this monster? Perhaps there would be little weight attached to my assertion, if I were to say that it is within the sphere of woman's influence to do this; that it rests with the wives of England to choose whether they will go on to estimate their position in society by the cost of their furniture, and the brilliance of their entertainments; or, by the moral and intellectual character of their social intercourse, by the high principle which regulates their actions, and by the domestic happiness to be found within their homes.

So long as we esteem those we meet with in society according to the fashion of their dress, the richness of their ornaments, or the style in which they live, it is a mockery of words to say that our standard of excellence

does not consist in that which money can purchase, or a vain and vulgar ambition attain. And so long as we feel cast down, disappointed, and distressed at being outshone in these outward embellishments, it is a certain proof that we are not attaching supreme importance to such as adorn the mind.

I am fully aware, in writing on this subject, that I am but lifting a feeble voice against the giant-force of popular feeling; that the state of our country, presenting an almost universal tendency towards an excess of civilization, added to the improvement in our manufactures, and the facility with which every kind of luxury is now obtained, are causes perpetually operating upon the great mass of the people, so as to urge them on to a state of eager competition in the display of all which money can procure; and that this competition is highly applauded by many, as beneficial to the nation at large, and especially so when that nation is considered merely as a mass of instrumentality, operating upon what is purely material.

But I am aware also, that this very cause, operating so widely and so powerfully as it does, ought to furnish the impetus of a new movement in society, by which the intellectual and the spiritual shall, by a fresh effort, be roused to its proper elevation above the material; and this necessary and truly noble effort, I must again repeat, it is in the power of the wives of England to make.

Nor would this great movement in reality be so difficult to effect, as we might be led to suppose from looking only at the surface of society, and observing the multiplicity of instances in which a false standard of excellence is established. We are sometimes too much influenced in our opinions, as well as too much discouraged in our endeavors to do good, by a superficial observation of the general state of things in social life; for there is often an under-current of feeling towards what is just and good, at work in the minds of those who, from being deficient in the moral power to act upon their own convictions, fall in with the superficial tide, and go along with the stream, against their better

judgment, if not against their real inclinations.

Thus, in a more close and intimate acquaintance with the world, we find, to our frequent satisfaction, that a combination of intellectual superiority and moral worth, is not in reality so lightly esteemed as at first we had supposed; that the weak and the vain, who spend their lives in striving after that which truly profiteth not, are dissatisfied and weary with their own fruitless efforts, and that others a little more gifted with understanding, and enlightened by juster views, though engaged in the same unprofitable struggle, would be more than glad of any thing that would assist them to escape from their grovelling anxieties, and low entanglements, so as in an open and decided manner to declare themselves on the side of what is intrinsically good, and consequently worthy of their utmost endeavors to attain.

Thus we find too, in spite of popular prejudice against a simple dress, or a homely way of living, that respectability, and genuine worth of character, are able not only to give dignity to any position in society, but also to command universal respect from others; and that, while few are bold enough to imitate, there is no small proportion of the community who secretly wish they were like those noble-minded individuals, who dare to aim at a true standard of excellence in the formation of their own habits, and the general conduct of their families.

Shall we then go on in the same way, forcing ourselves to be contemptible, and despising the bondage to which we submit? It is true, the effort necessary to be made, which the state of the times, and the satisfaction of our consciences, alike require of us, is hard for any single individual. But let us stand by each other in this great and noble cause. Let the strong endeavor to encourage and sustain the weak; and let us prove, for the benefit of succeeding generations, how much may be done for the happiness of our homes, and the good of our country, by being satis-

fied with the position in which Providence has placed us, and by endeavoring to adorn that position with the lasting embellishments which belong to an enlightened understanding, a well-regulated mind, and a benevolent, sincere, and faithful heart.

Our standard of excellence will then be no longer found in the most splendid jewelry, or the costliest plate; for in all these the vulgar and the ignorant may easily attain pre-eminence; but in the warmest welcome, the kindest service, the best-regulated household, the strictest judgment of ourselves, the most beneficial influence, the highest hopes for futurity, and the largest amount of domestic and social happiness which it is ever permitted to the families of earth to enjoy.

It is needless to say that all these embellishments to life may be ensured without regard to position in society; and if such were made the universal standard of excellence among the wives of England, much, if not all, the suffering which prevails wherever happiness is made to consist in what money can procure, would cease to be found within our homes; while, rising thus above our circumstances, we should no longer be subject in our hopes and fears to the fluctuations of commerce, or the uncertainty of a position depending solely upon its pecuniary advantages. We should then feel to be resting on a sure foundation, just in proportion as our standard was faithfully upheld. I do not say that we should be free from troubles, for such are the lot of all; but that single wide-spreading source of anxiety, which from its vastness appears in the present day to swallow up all others—the anxiety to attain a position higher than our own proper sphere, would then vanish from our land; and with it such a host of grievances, that in contemplating so blessed a change in our domestic and social condition, I cannot but again entreat the wives of England to think of these things, and finally to unite together in one firm determination to establish a new and a better standard by which to estimate their position in society.

CHAPTER IX.

DOMESTIC MANAGEMENT.

CLOSELY connected with the subject already dwelt upon, is that of domestic management; since whatever standard we choose, and whatever principles we adopt as our rule of action, will develop themselves in the system we pursue with regard to the conduct of our domestic affairs.

If, therefore, to appear well with the world according to the popular standard, be our supreme desire, the tendency of our domestic regulations will be to make, before our friends and associates, the greatest possible display of what is costly and elegant in our furniture and style of living; while, on the other hand, if our aim be to ensure the greatest amount of happiness to ourselves, and to those around us, we shall have a widely different task to pursue; and it is to the latter purpose only that I propose devoting this chapter, as the former could be better effected by consulting the upholsterer, the silversmith, or the jeweller.

Leaving to individuals thus qualified the important office of deciding what is according to the latest fashion, and which article is most approved in circles of distinction, we must turn our attention to a study of a totally different description; and if at first it should appear more difficult and complicated, it will have the merit of becoming every day more simple, and more clear; or if it should seem to involve by necessity a certain degree of suffering and self-denial, it will have the still higher merit of resulting in ultimate happiness; while the system of domestic management above alluded to, though in the outset full of promises of indulgence and pleasure, is certain to involve in greater and deeper perplexity the longer it is pursued, and finally to issue in vexation and disappointment.

It is, then, the way to make others happy, and consequently to be happy ourselves, which I am about to recommend; and if in doing this I am compelled to enter into the minute and homely details of woman's daily

life, I must claim the forbearance of the reader on the plea that no act can be so trifling as not to be ennobled by a great or a generous motive.

Before proceeding further with this subject, I must address one word to the ladies of the present day—to the refined and fastidious, who dwell in an atmosphere of taste, and make that their standard of excellence—lest from the freedom of my remarks upon dress and furniture, I should fall under their condemnation for undervaluing what is elegant, and wishing to discard what is ornamental; or, in other words, of being indifferent to the influence of beauty in general, as it may justly be said to refine our feelings, and enhance our enjoyments.

Without presuming to refer such readers to a work of my own,* in which they would find that my admiration of the beautiful, wherever it may be found, is scarcely inferior to theirs; I will simply express my conviction, that the exercise of good taste, which must ever be in accordance with the principles of beauty, fitness, and harmony, is by no means confined to the display of what is costly, elaborate, or superb; but may at all times be sufficiently developed in the arrangement of what is simple and appropriate. Indeed, there are nicer distinctions, and more exquisite sensibilities, required in the happy distribution of limited means, than in the choice and arrangement of the most costly ornaments which money can procure. In accordance with this fact, we almost invariably find writers of fiction bestowing what is gorgeous and elaborate upon scenes and characters with which the best feelings of the heart have little connection; while the favorite heroine is universally made conspicuous in her simplicity, and at the same time pre-eminent in her good taste.

But in addition to other considerations, it is in the present day so easy as to be common, and consequently to some extent vulgar, for all persons, both high and low, to adorn themselves and their houses to the

* The Poetry of Life.

utmost extent of their pecuniary means ; and they are also enabled to do this with a certain appearance of taste, because to that class of persons who supply the requisite articles of dress and furniture, it has become their study to ascertain what is most approved in the highest circles, as well as what is most ornamental and becoming in itself. And thus individuals who have but little taste themselves, may easily supply their deficiency by consulting what are called the first tradespeople, or those who sell to the highest purchasers.

How much more exquisite, then, must be the good taste, and delicate feeling, of her who has no such assistance to call in ; who expends but little money upon the entertainment of her friends, in order that she may see them the oftener, and with a less painful tax upon her household ; but who is still able so to conduct her household arrangements, that while there is no distressing appearance of excessive preparation to alarm her guests, an aspect of elegance and comfort is thrown over the most familiar things, so as to convey the idea of her family affairs being always conducted in strict accordance with the principles of taste—of that taste which consults the beauty of fitness and order, and which permits no extravagance or excess to interfere with the perfect harmony of its arrangements.

Here, then, we see the value of having made good taste one of the studies of early life ; for when the cares and anxieties of a household, added to the actual occupations of the mistress of a family, press upon the sometimes over-burdened wife, she will find little time, and perhaps less inclination, to enter into any abstruse calculations upon these points ; and hence we too frequently see among married women, a deterioration of character in this respect ; for where one single woman is careless and slovenly in her appearance or habits, there is reason to fear we might find many in the married state, who might justly be suspected of having lost their regard for those embellishments which depend upon the exercise of good taste.

In pursuing the subject of domestic management, we are again struck with the importance of speaking of things by their proper names ; for by some strange misnomer, those women have come to be generally called good managers, who put their whole souls into the business of providing for the mere bodily exigences of every day ; and thus the more refined, and sometimes the more intellectual, who have no idea how many good principles may be exemplified in the proper regulation of a household, have imbibed a sort of distaste for good management, as if it necessarily belonged exclusively to the province of the ignorant, or the vulgar-minded.

Managers, indeed, those household tormentors may be, who live perpetually in an element of strife and discord, where no one who valued their own peace would wish to live with them ; but *good* managers they certainly are not. It is not, therefore, in absolute bustle and activity, nor yet in mere cleanliness, order, and punctuality, that the perfection of domestic management consists ; for where the members of a household are made to feel that they pay too dearly, by the loss of their peace and comfort, for the cleanliness, order, and punctuality of the mistress, all claim on her part to the merit of *good* management must be relinquished.

It is most difficult, however, to be sufficiently solicitous about such points of observance, and not irritated by the neglect of them in others. Hence it is often said that ill-tempered servants are the cleanest and most orderly ; because the exactness and precision which regulate their conduct, produce in unenlightened minds, a tendency to exact the same from others ; and where this is impossible to be effected, produce a petulance and dissatisfaction which obtain for them the character of being ill-tempered ; while an opposite disposition, careless of order, cleanliness, or punctuality, obtains sometimes with great injustice the merit of being good-tempered, simply because any deviation from these points occasions to such a mind no disturbance whatever.

It has appeared to me ever since I was ca-

pable of extreme annoyance or extreme enjoyment from such causes, that the perfection of good domestic management required so many excellences both of head and heart, as to render it a study well worth the attention of the most benevolent and enlightened of human beings. For when we consider the simple fact, that it comprehends—nay, is mainly dependent upon the art of giving to every thing which comes within the sphere of practical duty its proper weight, and consequently its due share of relative importance, we see at once that it cannot be within the province of a common or a vulgar mind consistently to do this, more especially as there must not only be the perception to find out, and the judgment to decide upon things generally, but the good feeling—and here is the great point—to make that subservient which is properly inferior. Thus all selfish considerations must be set aside, all low calculations, all caprice, all vanity, all spite. And in how many instances do all these, with a multitude of other enemies to peace and happiness, mix themselves up with what people persist in calling *good management*, but which from this lamentable admixture, makes nobody like such management, or wish to be where it prevails!

Perhaps it has occurred to not a few of us to see one of these reputed good managers, bustling about a house from one apartment to another, peeping into corners, throwing open closets, emptying drawers, with a countenance which bid defiance for the time to every gentle or kindly feeling; and calling to one person, despatching another, or enumerating the misdeeds of a third, with a voice which even in its distant and unintelligible utterance, had the bitter tone of raking up old grievances, and throwing them about like firebrands on every side. And then the bursting forth of the actual eruption, where such a volcano was perpetually at work! The fusion of heated and heterogeneous particles into one general mass—the outpouring indiscriminate and vast—the flame, the smoke, the tumult! what is there, I would ask, in the absence of harmless dust, or in the presence

of the richest and best concocted food, to repay the wretched family where such a manager presides, for what must be endured through the course of any single day?

No—let me live in peace, is the natural demand of every human heart; and so far as relates to our cookery, and our carpets, we are happily all able to do this. We must, therefore, settle it in our minds, that whatever excellences may be attained in the preparation of food, the care of clothing, the arrangement of furniture, or the general order of rooms, that can never be called good management, which fails to secure peace, and to promote happiness.

Not that I would undervalue the care of the body, so far as tends to preserve health, and ensure cheerfulness; or, what is still more important, so far as serves to evince a high degree of tenderness and affection, strong evidence of which may sometimes be conveyed through this channel, when no other is open. It is the *supreme* importance attached to these cares and anxieties, which prevents such a system of management being properly called good.

In order to maintain general cheerfulness, and promote happiness throughout your household, it is essential that you cultivate within your own mind, a feeling of contentment with your home, your servants, and your domestic affairs in general, remembering that nothing which occurs to you in this department is the result of mere chance, but that all your trials, as well as your enjoyments, are appointed by a kind Providence, who knows better than you can know, exactly what is ultimately best for you. It is consequently no more a deviation from what you ought to be prepared to expect, that your servants should sometimes do wrong, that your plans should be thwarted by folly and perverseness, or that your house should be old and inconvenient; than that the blossoms in your garden should occasionally be blighted, or that a shower should fall at the moment you had fixed for going out.

Yet, to maintain this desirable cheerfulness through all circumstances, is, certainly no

easy task, unless both health and temper have been carefully attended to before marriage; for when the former fails, it is but natural that the animal spirits should fail too; and defects of temper if long indulged, so as to have grown into habit, will, in the general conduct of domestic affairs, be able to infuse a taint of bitterness into the kindest endeavors, so as effectually to defeat the best intentions.

How necessary is it, therefore, for all women to have learned to manage themselves, before undertaking the management of a household, for the charge is both a serious, and a comprehensive one; and however inexperienced a wife may be, however helpless, uncalculating, and unequal to the task, she no sooner takes upon herself the duties of a mistress, than she becomes, in a great measure, responsible for the welfare of every member of the family over which she presides. And not only is this her situation in the ordinary course of things, but on all extraordinary occasions, she must be at the same post, ever on the alert, prompt to direct, and ready with expedients suited to every emergency that may occur.

In cases of illness more especially, though the more laborious duties of the sick-room may with propriety be deputed to others, there can be no excuse for the mistress who does not make it her business to see that proper attention is paid to the directions of the doctor, as well as to the ventilation of rooms, and all those other means of alleviating pain, or facilitating recovery, instead of which, inexperienced nurses are so apt to substitute notions and nostrums of their own.

But beyond the care of the patient, that of the nurse also devolves upon the mistress of the house, to see that her wants are properly supplied, that a judicious distribution of her time is made, so as to allow of a reasonable portion of rest; or, if wearied out, to take care that her place is supplied, so that none may have to complain of hardship or oppression. And here we may observe by the way, that this kind of care and consideration be-

stowed upon those who habitually bear the burden of domestic labor, constitutes one of the strongest bonds which can exist between a mistress and her servants; besides rewarding her, in many instances, by a double measure of their gratitude and their faithfulness.

If the mistress of the house, as is not unfrequently the case with kind-hearted women, should take charge of the patient herself, it then becomes her duty not to act so entirely from the impulse of feeling, as to neglect her own health. I mention this, because there is a kind of romantic devotion to the duties of the sick-room, more especially where the sufferer is an object of interest or affection, which carries on the young nurse from one day of solicitude to another, without refreshment, without rest, and without exercise in the open air, until nature being completely exhausted, she herself becomes a source of trouble, and an object of anxiety and care. By this apparent generosity, the kindest intentions are often frustrated; while the household of such a mistress will necessarily be thrown into alarm and disorder, at the very time when it is most important that order and quiet should be maintained throughout.

To those who please themselves with the idea that such romantic self-devotion is the extreme of generosity, it may appear a cold kind of reasoning to advocate the importance of self-preservation, by frequently taking exercise at short intervals in the open air. Yet, I own I am one of those who prefer the kindness which lasts, to that which expends itself in sudden and violent effort; and I would, therefore, strongly urge upon the wife not only to attend to such means of prolonging her own usefulness, but to see that the nurse employed under her direction does the same.

Nor is it only in such cases as that already described, that married women are apt to neglect the best means of maintaining cheerfulness, and preserving health, two blessings which they above all other persons have the most reason to estimate highly. Not that I would insinuate an idea of any culpable ne-

glect of the employment of doctors, or the use of medicines. I believe this can scarcely be charged upon the wives of England, as a general fault. But I have known some women almost entirely neglect all kinds of exercise in the open air, either because they were too busy, or it tired them too much; or, for that most amiable of all reasons, because their husbands were absent, and they were too dependent to walk alone. And thus, from the very excess of their affection, they were satisfied, on a husband's return, to be weary, listless, dispirited, and altogether incapable of adding to his enjoyment, whatever he—happy man that he must be, to be so tenderly beloved!—might add to theirs.

But fortunately for the character of woman, and may we not add, for the patience of man, there are happier methods of proving the existence of affection than that which is exhibited by the display either of an excessive and imprudent self-devotion, which effectually defeats its own object; or a weak and childish dependence, which is nothing better than a sort of disguised selfishness. In accordance with deeper and more chastened feelings of regard, is that system of careful but quiet watchfulness over the general health of a husband, or a family, which detects every symptom of indisposition, and provides against all unnecessary aggravation of such symptoms by any arrangement of domestic affairs which can be made so as to spare an invalid, or prevent the occurrence of illness.

I believe that nothing tends more to the increase of those diseases classed in popular phraseology under the head of bilious, which prevail so extensively in the present day, than long fasting, with heavy meals at the close of the day. Where fashion is the root of this evil, it is to be supposed that the sufferers have their own reward; at all events, a mere matter of choice, it would be impertinence to interfere with; but in the case of those husbands whose business calls them from home during the greater part of every day, surely something might be done by the wife, to break through this habit, either by supplying them with intermediate refresh-

ment, or inducing them by persuasion or argument to make some different distribution of their time.

And where symptoms of indisposition do appear, how beautiful is that display of affection in a wife, who can put aside all her own little ailments for the more important consideration of those of a husband; who can bear without a murmur to have her domestic affairs at any moment deranged, so as may best suit his feelings or his health; and who can make up her mind with promptness and cheerfulness, even to accompany him from home, at any sacrifice of her own comfort and convenience! How precious then is the health and the ability to do this, and to do it with energy, and perfect good-will—how much more precious than the childish fondness to which allusion has already been made, which would lead her to sit and faint beside him in his illness, or to neglect the exercise necessary for her own health, because, forsooth, she could not walk without him!

Nor let it be imagined from the familiar and apparently trifling nature of the instances adduced in relation to the subject of domestic management, that the subject itself is one of little moment. Necessity compels the selection of only a few cases from the mass of evidence which might be brought to prove how many important principles may be acted upon in the familiar transactions of every day. The woman of naturally restless and irritable temper, for instance, who, without controlling her own feelings, would effectually destroy the peace of every member of her household, may by habits of self-government, and by a kind and disinterested regard for the happiness of those around her, so far restrain the natural impetuosity of her character, as to become a blessing instead of a torment to the household over which she presides; while the tender and affectionate wife, who would fondly and foolishly waste her strength by incessant watching over a husband, or a child, may, by the habit of making impulse subservient to judgment, preserve her health for the service of many a future day, and thus render herself, what every married woman

ought to be—the support and the comfort of her whole household.

We see here, although the instances themselves may appear insignificant, that in these two cases are exemplified the great principles of disinterested kindness, prudence, and self-government. Thus it is with every act that falls within the sphere of female duty. The act itself may be trifling; but the motives by which it is sustained may be such as to do honor to the religion we profess. And we must ever bear in mind, that not only do we honor that religion by engaging in public services on behalf of our fellow-creatures, or for the good of our own souls; but by restraining evil tempers, and selfish dispositions, in the privacy of our own domestic sphere; and by cherishing for purposes of practical usefulness, those amiable and benevolent feelings, which are not only most endearing to our fellow-creatures, but most in accordance with the perfection of the Christian character.

In turning our attention again to the practical part of female duty, as connected with domestic management, that important study which refers to the best means of economizing time and money, is forcibly presented to our notice. Having dwelt at considerable length upon the subject of economy of time in a former work,* I shall not repeat the arguments there made use of to show the importance of this great principle of good management; but simply state, that if essential before marriage to the attainment of intellectual or moral good, and to the welfare and comfort of those with whom we are connected; it becomes doubly so when the mistress of a house has not only to economize her own time, but to portion out that of others.

In this, as in all other cases where good influence is made the foundation of rightly-exercised authority, the married woman must not forget that example goes before precept. Whatever then may be the trial to her natural feelings, she will, if actuated by this principle, begin the day by rising early; for it is

in vain to urge others to do what they see that we have not either the strength, or not the inclination to do ourselves. Besides which, there is little inducement for servants or other inferior members of a family to rise early, when they know that the business of the day will be delayed by the mistress herself not being ready; while, on the other hand, if prepared to expect that she will be up early herself, there are few who could be so unaccommodating as to thwart her wishes by not endeavoring to be ready at the appointed time.

Nor is there any thing depending upon ourselves which tends more to the proper regulation of the mind, as well as the household, than the habit of rising early—so early as to have time to think, as most persons do in the morning hours, clearly and dispassionately; when, free from the disturbance of feeling so often excited by contact with others, the mind is at liberty to draw its own conclusions, from a general survey of the actual state of things, uninterrupted by any partial impressions received through the medium of the outward senses. Thus it often happens, that in the early morning we are brought to serious and just conclusions, which we should never have arrived at, where the actual circumstances which gave rise to our reflections, were transpiring beneath our notice, or had the persons most intimately connected with such circumstances been present during the formation of our opinions.

The morning, then, is the time for reviewing the actions and events of the previous day, and for forming, for that which has commenced, a new set of plans, upon the convictions which such a calm and impartial review is calculated to produce. The morning is the time for gathering our thoughts together, for arranging our resources, and for asking with humble reverence that Divine assistance, without which we have no right to expect that the coming day will be spent more satisfactorily than the past.

Such are the higher advantages derived from habits of early rising, but there are also practical duties to be attended to by all mar-

* *The Daughters of England.*

ried women, in the commencement of the day, which must be so managed as not to interfere with, or delay the business of others; or the end of early rising will be entirely defeated, as regards its good influence upon the general habits of a family.

I mention this, because there are some well-intentioned persons, who habitually rise early, and are yet habitually too late for breakfast, wondering not the less every day how it can possibly be that they are so. To such I would venture to hint, that *despatch* is an excellent thing in whatever we have to do; and that the habit of trifling is one of the most formidable enemies to good intention in this respect, because at the same time that it hinders our practical usefulness, it beguiles us into the belief, that we are actually doing something—nay, even a great deal; yet, look to the end, and nothing is really done.

If such persons are unacquainted with the merits of despatch, or refuse to adopt it as a wiser and a better rule, I know of nothing they can do, except it be to rise a little earlier, and a little earlier still, until they find that they have exactly proportioned their time to their requirements; but on no account ought they to allow the breakfast, or the business of the day, to be retarded so as to meet their convenience. Whatever time they take from sleep is their own, and they have a right to dispose of it as they please; but that time can scarcely be called so, which is portioned out to others, especially where it is barely sufficient for the business they are required to do through the course of the day.

Perhaps it is with us all too frequent a mistake to suppose that time is our own, and that the higher our station, and consequently the greater the number of persons subject to our control, the more entirely this is the case. I have already said that the time we take from sleep, may with some justice be called so; but except in a state of existence entirely isolated, and exempt from relative duties, I am not aware how conscientious persons can trifle with time, and not feel that they are encroaching upon the rights of others, to say nothing of the more serious responsibility

neglected by the waste of so valuable a talent committed to their trust.

There is no time perhaps so entirely wasted as that which is spent in waiting for others, because while expectation is kept up that each moment will terminate our suspense, we cannot prudently engage in any other occupation. If, then, the mistress of a house, by habitual delay of breakfast, keeps as many as four persons waiting half an hour every morning, she is the cause of two valuable hours being wasted to them, which they would most probably have preferred spending in any other way rather than in waiting for her.

It must of course be allowed, that every master and mistress of a family enjoys the right of breakfasting as late as they choose, provided they give directions accordingly; but where there is one in the middle ranks of society who will order breakfast at ten, there are twenty who will order it at eight, and not be ready before nine. It can only be to such deviations from arrangements made by the heads of the family, and understood by all its members, that the foregoing observations apply.

It is a great point in the economy of time, that different kinds of work should be made to fill up different intervals. Hence the great value of having a variety of needlework, knitting, &c.; for besides the astonishing amount which may thus almost imperceptibly be done, a spirit of contentment and cheerfulness is much promoted by having the hands constantly employed. Thus, if ever the mistress of a house spends what is called the dark hours in idleness, it is a proof that she has either not properly studied the arts of knitting and netting; or that she is a very indifferent workwoman not to be able to pay for the use of candles. Could such persons once be brought to appreciate the really beneficial effects of constant employment upon the mind and temper, could they taste those sweet musings, or enjoy those ingatherings of thought, which are carried on while a piece of work is growing beneath their hands, they would never again require urging to

those habits of industry which may truly be said to bring with them their own reward.

Habitually idle persons are apt to judge of the difficulty of being industrious, by what it costs them to do any thing they may happen to undertake; the movements of a naturally indolent person being composed of a series of painful exertions, while the activity of an industrious person resembles the motion of a well-regulated machine, which, having been once set at work, requires comparatively little force to keep it going. It is consequently by making industry a habit, and by no other means, that it can be thoroughly enjoyed; for if between one occupation and another, time is allowed for sensations of weariness to be indulged, or for doubts to be entertained as to what shall be done next, with those who have much to do all such endeavors to be industrious must necessarily be irksome, if not absolutely laborious.

How pitiable then is the situation of that married woman who has never fully realized the true enjoyment of industry, nor the advantages of passing rapidly from one occupation to another, as if it was the business of life to keep doing, rather than to wait to see what was to be done, and to question the necessity of doing it! Pitiable, indeed, is that woman, because in a well-regulated household, even where the mistress takes no part in the executive business herself, there must still be a constant oversight, and constant forethought, accompanied with a variety of calculations, plans, and arrangements, which to an indolent person cannot fail to be irksome in the extreme; while to one who has been accustomed to rely upon her own resources in the constant exercise of industry, they give a zest and an interest to all the duties of life, and at the same time impart a feeling of contentment and cheerfulness sufficient of itself to render every duty light.

There is no case in which example is more closely connected with influence than in this. A company of idle persons can keep each other in countenance to almost any extent;

while there are few who cannot be made ashamed of idleness by having constantly before them an example of industry. Thus where the mistress of a house on extraordinary occasions is ever ready to lend assistance herself; where she evinces a decided preference for doing things with her own hand, rather than seeing them left undone; and where it is known that her mind is as quick to perceive what is wanted as her hand is willing to execute it; such a mistress will seldom have to complain that her servants are idle, or that they cannot be brought to make the necessary effort when extra work has to be done.

There is, however, a just medium to be observed between doing too much, and too little, in domestic affairs; and this point of observance must be regulated entirely by the circumstances of the family, and the number of servants employed. It can never be said that the atmosphere of the kitchen is an element in which a refined and intellectual woman ought to live; though the department itself is one which no sensible woman would think it a degradation to overlook. But instead of maintaining a general oversight and arrangement of such affairs, some well-intentioned women plunge head, heart, and hand into the vortex of culinary operations, thinking, feeling, and doing what would be more appropriately left to their servants.

This fault, however, is one which belongs but little to the present times. It was the fault of our grandmothers, and we are endeavoring to improve upon their habits by falling into the opposite extreme, forgetting, in our eagerness to secure to ourselves personal ease and indulgence, how many good and kind feelings may be brought into exercise by a participation in the practical part of domestic management—how much valuable health, and how much vivacity and cheerfulness, alternating with wholesome and real rest, are purchased by habits of personal activity.

But it is impossible to do justice to this subject without entering into it fully, and at considerable length; and having already done

this elsewhere,* under the head of "Kindness and Consideration," I will spare the reader a repetition of my own sentiments upon a subject of such vital importance to the wives of England.

CHAPTER X.

ORDER, JUSTICE, AND BENEVOLENCE.

THE general tendency of domestic management should be, to establish throughout a household the principles of order, justice, and benevolence.

In speaking first of order, I would not be understood to restrict the meaning of the word to such points of observance as the placing of chairs in a drawing-room, or ornaments on a mantelpiece. The principle of order, in its happiest development, has to do with the state of the mind, as well as the personal habits. Thus a due regard to the general fitness of things, correct calculations as to time and means, with a just sense of relative importance, so as to keep the less subservient to the greater, all belong to the department of order in a well-governed household, and should all be exemplified in the general conduct of the mistress.

There is no surer method of maintaining authority over others, than by showing that we have learned to govern ourselves. Thus a well-ordered mind obtains an influence in society, which it would be impossible for mere talent, without this regard to order, ever to acquire. All caprice, all hasty or violent expressions, all sudden and extravagant ebullitions of feeling of any kind whatever, exhibited before servants and inferiors, have a tendency to lower the dignity of a mistress, and consequently to weaken her influence.

The mistress of a house should always appear calm, and perfectly self-possessed,

whether she feels so or not; and if from an accumulation of household disasters, particularly such as mal-occurrences before her guests, the agitation of her feelings should be too great for her powers of self-control, she may always find a natural and appropriate outlet for them, by sympathizing with other sufferers in the same calamity, and thus evincing her regard for them, rather than for herself.

Nor ought we to class this species of self-discipline with those artificial manners which are assumed merely for the sake of effect. If the same individual who controlled her feelings before her guests, should go out among her servants and give full vent to them there, such a case would certainly deserve to be so classed. But the self-control I would gladly recommend, is of a widely different order, extending to a mastery over the feelings, as well as the expressions. In the former case, a lady seated at the head of her table, will sometimes speak in a sharp whisper to a servant, with a countenance in which all the furies might be represented as one; when suddenly turning to her guests, she will address them with the blandest smiles, even before the cloud has had time to vanish from her brow. In the latter case, the mistress of the house will recollect, that others have been made to suffer perhaps more than herself, and that whatever the cause of vexation or distress may be, it can only be making that distress greater, for her to appear angry or disturbed. By such habits of reflection, and by the mastery of judgment over impulse, she will be able in time, not only to appear calm, but really to feel so; or if there should be just as much excitement as may be agreeably carried off in condolence with her friends, there will never be sufficient really to destroy either their comfort, or her own peace of mind.

In speaking of the beauty of order, would that it were possible to impress this fact upon the minds of English wives—that there is neither beauty nor order in making their servants and their domestic affairs in general, the subject of conversation in company. To

* The Women of England.

hear some good ladies talking, one would really think that servants were a sort of plague sent upon the nation at large, and upon them in particular. To say nothing of the wrong state of feeling evinced by allowing one of our greatest sources of personal comfort to be habitually regarded as a bane rather than a blessing ; we see here one of those instances in which the laws of order are infringed by a disregard to the fitness of things ; for however interesting our domestic affairs may be to ourselves, it requires but little tact or observation to discover, that they interest no one else, unless it be our nearest and most intimate friends, whose personal regard to us will induce them to listen with kindness to whatever we describe as being connected with our welfare or happiness.

Upon the same principle, a history of bodily ailments should never be forced upon visitors ; for as it requires either to be an intimate friend, or a member of the same family, to feel any particular interest in the good or bad practices of servants ; so it requires that our friends should be very tenderly attached to us to care about our ailments, or even to listen with any real attention when we make them the subject of conversation. In all such cases, it is possible that a third party may be more quick to perceive the real state of things than the party most concerned ; but I own I have often wondered what the habitual complainer of household and personal grievances could find to induce her to go on in the averted look, the indifferent answer, and the absent manner of her guests ; yet, such is the entire occupation of some minds with subjects of this nature, that they are scarcely alive to impressions from any other source ; and perhaps the surest way to prevent our annoyance of others, is to recollect how often and how much we have been annoyed in this way ourselves.

It is, then, no mean or trifling attainment for the mistress of a house to be thoroughly at home in her own domestic affairs ; deeply interested in the character and habits of all the different members of her household, so as to extend over them the care and the solici-

tude of a mother ; and yet before her guests, or in the presence of her friends, to be perfectly disengaged, able to enter into all their causes of anxiety, or hope, and above all, to give an intellectual character and a moral tendency to the general tone of the conversation in which she takes a part. With nothing less than this strict regulation of the feelings, as well as the habits, this regard to fitness, and this maintenance of order in the subserviency of one thing to another, ought the wives of England to be satisfied ; for it is to them we look for every important bias given to the manners and the morals of that class of society upon which depends so much of the good influence of England as a nation.

A love of order is as much exemplified by doing any thing at its proper time as in its appropriate place ; and it rests with a mistress of a house to see that her own time, and that of her servants, is judiciously proportioned out. Some mistresses, forgetting this, and unacquainted with the real advantages of order, are in the habit of calling their servants from one occupation to another, choosing extra work for them to do on busy days, crowding a variety of occupations into one short space of time, and then complaining that nothing is thoroughly done ; while others will put off necessary preparations until so late that everybody is flurried and confused, and well if they are not out of temper too. It may possibly have occurred to others as it has to myself, to be present where, on the occasion of an evening party being expected, all the good things for the entertainment had to be made on the afternoon of the same day. I need hardly add that when the guests arrived, neither mistress nor servants were in a very fit state to go through the ceremonial of a dignified reception.

Forethought, then, is a most essential quality in the mistress of a house, if she wishes to maintain throughout her establishment the principle of order. Whatever others *do*, she must *think*. It is not possible for order to exist, where many minds are employed in directing a variety of movements. There must be one presiding intellect to guide the

whole; and whether the household to be governed belong to a mansion or a cottage, whether the servants to be directed be many or few, that presiding power must be vested in the mistress, or in some one individual deputed to act in her stead. It is from leaving this thinking and contriving part, along with the executive, to servants, that we see perpetuated so many objectionable and absurd methods of transacting the business of domestic life; methods handed down from one generation to another, and acted upon sometimes with great inconvenience and equal waste, simply because habit has rendered it a sort of established thing, that whatever is done, should be done in a certain manner; for servants are a class of people who think but little, and many of them would rather take double pains, and twice the necessary length of time in doing their work the old way, than risk the experiment of a new one, even if it should ever occur to them to make it.

It must rest with the mistress, then, to introduce improvements and facilities in the transaction of household business; and she will be but little fitted for her office who has not studied before her marriage the best way of doing common and familiar things. Whatever her good intentions, or even her measure of good sense may be, she will labor under painful disadvantages, and difficulties scarcely to be overcome, by taking up this study for the first time after she has become the mistress of a house; for all points of failure here, her own servants will be quick to detect, and most probably not slow to take advantage of.

A married woman thus circumstanced, will certainly act most wisely by studiously concealing her own ignorance; and in order to do this effectually, she must avoid asking foolish questions, at the same time that she watches every thing that is done with careful and quiet scrutiny, so as to learn the how and the why of every trivial act before engaging in it herself, or even venturing a remark upon the manner in which it may be done by others.

But essential as knowledge is to good domestic management, we must ever bear in mind that knowledge is not all. There must be a love of order, a sense of fitness, a quick perception of the appropriateness of time and place, lively impressions of reality and truth, and clear convictions on the subject of relative importance; and in order to the complete qualification of a good wife and mistress, there must be along with all these, not only a willingness, but a strong determination to act upon such impressions and convictions to the full extent of their power to promote social, domestic, and individual happiness.

And if all these requirements are to be classed under the head of order, we must look for those which are still more serious under that of justice.

The word justice has a somewhat startling sound to female ears, and I might perhaps be induced to use a softer expression, could I find one suited to my purpose; though after all, I fancy we should none of us be much the worse for having the word justice, in its simple and imperative strictness, more frequently applied to our relative and social duties. It is, in fact, a good old-fashioned notion, that of doing justice, which has fallen a little too much into disuse; or perhaps, I ought rather to say, has been dismissed from its place among female duties, and considered too exclusively as belonging to points of law and cases of public trial.

I am well aware that justice in its highest sense belongs not to creatures frail, short-sighted, and liable to deception like ourselves; but that strong sense of truth, and honesty, and individual right, which we naturally include in our idea of the love of justice, was surely given us to be exercised in our dealings with each other, and in the general conduct of our domestic affairs. This regard to what is just in itself, necessarily including what is due to others, and what is due from them also, is the moral basis upon which all good management depends; for when once this foundation is removed, an inlet is opened for innumerable lower mo-

tives, such as selfishness, vanity, caprice, and a host of others of the same unworthy character, to enter and mix themselves up with the conduct of daily life.

We cannot therefore be too studious to detect, or too prompt to overcome, these enemies to right feeling and to duty; and I believe we shall be best enabled to do this, with the Divine blessing upon our endeavors, by a habit of constantly stretching our ideas to the broad and comprehensive nature of justice in general—justice in its simplicity and its strictness, without deterioration from the influence of custom, and without those qualifications which owe their existence to an artificial state of society.

Imbued with a strong sense of justice, the kind and considerate mistress will see that every member of her household has some rights which others ought not to be allowed to infringe; and if she be attentive to the welfare of her family, she will find sufficient exercise for her love of justice in the settlement of all differences which may arise out of the clashing of individual interests. Even the most insignificant member of such a family, that unfortunate attached to almost all establishments under the name of "the boy," all from him down to the very animals, will have their rights, and such rights can only be consistently maintained by the authority of one presiding mind.

Thus the abuse or the neglect of domestic animals can never prevail to any great extent, where the mistress does her duty; for though servants will sometimes lavish their caresses upon such creatures, they are for the most part careless about their actual wants; and unless properly instructed, and even looked after in this respect, they will sometimes be absolutely cruel. The mistress of a house may thus have an opportunity of teaching her servants, what they possibly will have had no means of learning at home, that these are creatures committed to our care by their Creator and ours, and that we have no more right to practise cruelty upon them, than we have to disobey the righteous law of God in any other respect.

Regarding the important subject of economy in its character of a great moral obligation, rather than simply as an individual benefit, I shall place it under the head of justice; and I do this in the humble hope, that when so classed, it may obtain a greater share of serious attention than could be desired, were the subject to be considered the mere act of saving money. True economy, and that which alone deserves our regard as a study, I have already described as consisting in doing the greatest amount of good with the smallest pecuniary means—not only good to the poor, and to society in general, but good to the family of which we form a part; and of course this study includes the prevention of absolute waste in any department whatever. Such a system of economy, I consider to be entirely distinct from the mere act of saving money; except so far as that all economical persons will endeavor to save money to a certain extent, in order that they or their families may not be dependent upon others. A sense of justice will also induce them to make a suitable provision for those under their care, without doing which they have certainly no right to be generous.

Every thing necessary to the practice of this kind of equitable economy, is consequently necessary to the exercise of justice. We shall therefore turn our attention the more seriously to a few hints on the most commonplace of all subjects—that of saving.

Nor let the refined and fastidious young wife, retaining all her boarding-school contempt for such homely household virtues, dismiss the subject with the hasty conclusion, that such studies are only for the vulgar or the low. There are those who could tell her, that there is a vulgarity in extravagance, of which the really well-bred are seldom guilty; and that no persons are so much addicted to the lavish and indiscriminate waste of money, as those who have been raised from low birth and education to affluent means.

But it is impossible to believe that the sound-minded, honest-hearted, upright women, who form the majority of English wives, should deceive themselves by notions so ab-

surd as these ; and I only wish it were possible to embody in the present work, the united evidence of such women in favor of the plans they have themselves found most conducive to the promotion of comfort and economy combined.

I place these two words together, because that can never be called good management, which has not reference to both, or which extracts from the one for the purpose of adding to the other ; that can never be called good management, where economy takes precedence of comfort, except only in cases of debt, where comfort ought unquestionably to give place to honesty ; and still less can that be called good management where comfort is the only consideration, because the higher consideration of justice must then be neglected.

In order to carry out the principle of justice in her household transactions, it is highly important that the mistress of a family should make herself thoroughly acquainted with the prices and qualities of all common and familiar things, that she may thus be enabled to pay equitably for every thing brought into her house. These are opportunities of observing or violating the laws of justice, which few mistresses have the energy, and still fewer the inclination, to look after themselves ; and they are consequently left for the most part to servants and trades-people to adjust as they think proper, each regarding their own interest and convenience, as it is perfectly natural that they should. Servants of course prefer having every article of household consumption brought to the door ; and in large towns this is easily managed by small traders in such articles, who can regulate their prices as they think proper, without the cognizance of the mistress of the house, and sometimes without any direct reference to what is the real marketable value of their property. That too much is trusted to interested parties in such cases as these, must be clear to the meanest understanding ; for we all know the tendency there is in human nature, to use for selfish purposes the power of doing what is not strictly right, and especially where this can be done without fear of detection.

In the "Daughters of England" I have strongly recommended that young women should cultivate habits of attention to the public as well as the private affairs of the country in which they live, so far as to obtain a general knowledge of its laws and institutions, and of the great political movements taking place around them. The abuse of such knowledge is to make it the basis of party feeling and political animosity ; but its proper and legitimate use is that which enables respectable, influential, and patriotic women, to carry out the views of an enlightened legislature through those minor channels which form the connection between public and private life, and the right direction of which is of the utmost importance to the welfare of the country in general.

How little do women, poring over their worsted work, sometimes think of these things ! How little do they reflect, that not only is it a part of their duty to govern their household well, but so to govern it, that those wise and benevolent enactments designed for the good of the nation at large, which it has been put into the hearts of our rulers to make, may not be frustrated for want of their prompt and willing concurrence ! When once this idea has been fully impressed upon the mind of woman, she will not, she cannot, think it a degradation to use every personal effort for the correction of public abuses, rather than it should be said, that while the legislature of England evinced the utmost solicitude for the happiness of the people, there was not patriotism enough among her women to assist in promoting their general good.

But to return to particular instances of domestic economy. The habit of making what are called "cheap bargains," does not appear to me worthy of being classed under this head ; because the principle of economy would inspire a wish to pay an equitable and fair price for a good article, rather than a low price for a poor one ; and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, articles offered for sale as being remarkably cheap, are of very inferior quality.

But above all other things to be guarded against in making bargains, is that of taking advantage of the poor. It is a cruel system carried on by the world, and one against which woman, with her boasted kindness of heart, ought especially to set her face—that of first ascertaining the position, or degree of necessity of the party we deal with, and then offering a price accordingly. Yet, how often do we hear the expression—"I get it done so well, and so cheaply; for, poor things, they are in such distress, they are glad to do it at any price!"

And a pitiful sight it is to see the plain work, and fine work too, that is done upon such terms. A pitiful thing it is to think of the number of hours which must have been spent, perhaps in the endurance of hunger and cold, before the scanty pittance was earned; and to compare this with the golden sums so willingly expended at some fashionable milliner's, where, because the lady of the house is *not in want*, the kind-hearted purchaser would be sorry to insult her feelings by offering less.

The same principle applies to ready payment of the poor. It is a mockery of words, to tell them you have no change. The poor know perfectly well that change is to be had; and when you tell them to call again in a few days, or when it is more convenient to attend to them, perhaps the disappointed applicant goes sorrowing home, to meet the eager glance of a parent, or a child, who has been all day calculating upon some article of food or clothing, which that little payment was expected to have furnished them with the means of procuring.

I am aware that disappointments of this kind are sometimes unavoidable; but I appeal to my countrywomen, whether as a mere matter of convenience, the poor ought to be sent empty away, when the rich and the independent, because of their greater influence, and the higher respect in which they are held, are paid in a prompt and willing manner, nothing being said either about inconvenience or difficulty.

To all persons, however, whether high or

low, rich or poor, it is highly important to good management that frequent payments should be made. Weekly payment of all trades-people is the best, because then neither party has time to forget what has been bought, and they are consequently less likely to make mistakes in their final settlement. As a check upon such mistakes in the making up of accounts, it is indispensable that all bills should be kept for a year at least after their payment; and though this practice may at first appear useless and troublesome, ample satisfaction will eventually be derived by exemption from all that uncomfortable feeling which arises from uncertainty in this respect—from an idea of having either injured another, or being injured one's self.

There is a foolish habit to which many shopkeepers are addicted, of persuading married women, and particularly the young and inexperienced, to purchase on credit. When they see a lady evidently tempted, looking at an article again and again, and repeatedly asking the price, as if in the hope each time of finding it less, it is perfectly natural in them, if they know the respectability of their customer, to fall in with her weakness, and, accommodating themselves to her inadequate means, to offer the tempting article, to be paid for on some distant day. It is still more foolish, therefore, in the woman who goes unprovided for such a purchase, to trust herself so far as to trifle with temptation; but the extreme of her folly, is to allow herself to be prevailed upon, at last, to take what she cannot pay for, and probably does not really want.

It is often stated by imprudent women, as an excuse for buying what they do not need, that it was "so extremely cheap;" but that must always be a dear article to us which we have no use for; and the money which such things would cost must, in the end, prove more valuable than the cheapest goods which are not necessary, or not calculated to be of use.

Married women who love justice to themselves as well as to others, should always keep strict accounts. Without some evidence

of this kind, husbands are sometimes a little incredulous, and such a proof of the right distribution of her means, no one need hesitate to show. While, however, the husband is thus enabled to see for himself what has been the actual expenditure, it must not be supposed that he is qualified to judge in all cases of the necessity for such expenditure being made. The wife alone can do this; and if she enjoys that inestimable blessing to a married woman, her husband's confidence, he will be satisfied that all the rest is right, whether he understands it or not. There is no doubt, if he was consulted about every purchase to be made, he would think in some instances that the article could be done without; while in others, he would probably choose a far more expensive one than was necessary. A wise and prudent woman will, therefore, so manage these affairs, as to obtain the privilege of having them left entirely to her judgment.

She will find too, that economy does not consist so much in buying little, as in buying suitably; for a house or a wardrobe may be so scantily supplied, that each article has to do the service of many, and is thus prematurely worn out, or effectually destroyed, by being put to uses for which it never was designed. The poor girl who has but a thin pair of shoes, and no money to buy stronger, must unavoidably destroy them in one day's journey; when, had they been used only for proper purposes, they might have lasted a year. And it is the same with a scantily furnished kitchen. Absolute waste to a very great extent must necessarily be the consequence of having but few implements for daily use, and making them serve every purpose as occasion may require. With the best supply of kitchen utensils, however, their selection and use ought not to be left entirely to servants. The mistress herself must sometimes direct in this department, unless she would see the amount of her bills alarmingly increased by the habit most servants have, of snatching up what is nearest to them, rather than thinking what is fittest to be used.

The same rule applies to household linen,

of which an ample supply, given out with regularity and judgment, will always be found most economical in the end. But on no account whatever let any deficiency in this department, or in that of your kitchen, be supplied by borrowing. There is no occasion for the defects of your establishment to be made known to others, and, except in cases of extraordinary emergency, if you cannot afford to purchase what is wanted, the sooner you learn to do without it the better.

With regard to food, too, I am inclined to think that to have a table comfortably supplied with a moderate variety of dishes, is by no means inconsistent with the strictest economy. I have sometimes even fancied that a spare dinner had the effect of producing a very disproportionate appetite; at least I remember, when a girl, having occasionally the privilege of sitting down to a table of this kind, when I always felt most perversely inclined to eat up every thing that was set before me.

But leaving this fact to be settled by political economists, it must be allowed that persons in general are not so childish as to eat more, because they see more; and in the appearance of a well-supplied table, there is an air of comfort and respectability, which under ordinary circumstances, I cannot think we should derive any advantage from giving up. Besides which, a certain extent of variety affords opportunity for bringing out again, in a more attractive form, many things which must have been otherwise dismissed altogether. In this art the French have arrived at great perfection; and as a proof of the correctness of these observations, the cheapness of their way of living is always a subject of surprise to the English, on their first acquaintance with French habits.

Still, we must feel that the system is a dangerous one, when it leads to excess; far better—far better is it to eat the last morsel of plain food prepared every day, than to give the time, and the thoughts, too much to the preparation and enjoyment of food.

But the great point to be observed, both in the study and the practice of economy, is to

proportion your expenditure to your means. The difference, even of a hundred a year, in the income of a family, makes a considerable difference in the duties of the mistress with regard to economy. Thus, it may be highly meritorious for one married woman to do all her needlework herself, while, in another, it would evince a disregard for the fitness of things, to spend her time in doing what she would be more in the way of her duty to employ the poor and the needy to do for her.

In all these cases, it is evident that principle, rather than inclination, must form the basis of our actions; and in following out the principle of justice more especially, that self must hold a very inferior place in our calculations. The same may be said of those duties which follow, and which are comprised under the head of benevolence; for though selfishness and generosity may, in the first view, appear to be directly opposite in their nature, the act of giving is, in many cases, only the gratification of a refined selfishness, with which the principle of integrity has to wage determined war. Thus there can be no generosity in giving what is not, strictly speaking, our own, nor justice in receiving thanks for what we had no right to give.

To be solicitous either to give, or to receive, costly presents in your own family, is a sort of childish weakness, and particularly to expect such presents from a husband, for where there is a perfect identity of feeling and possession, both as regards money and goods, the wife may just as well purchase the valuable article for herself. There is, however, something gratifying to every heart in being remembered during absence; but the gratification consists rather in finding that our trifling wants have been thought of and supplied, than that the indulgence of our self-love or our vanity has had to be taken into account; and a thimble in such a case may be more valuable than a costly gem.

The married woman, as soon as she takes upon herself the responsibility of standing at the head of an establishment, should withdraw herself in a great measure from those little obligations and kindnesses, which as a

young woman and unmarried, she might with propriety have received. She must, therefore, strictly avoid courting such favors, especially from the great, remembering that in being the mistress of a house, she has herself become a source from whence kindness ought to flow, and consequently is not so proper an object for receiving it.

To be "just before we are generous," is a good old maxim. The duties of benevolence must, therefore, always be made subservient to those of integrity. But still, where a family is neither in debt, nor in want of the common necessities of life, there must be something due from such a family to those who are more needy than themselves.

It is a privilege we all enjoy, of being at liberty to choose our own way of being charitable; yet if we think seriously on the subject of giving, as a duty, and regard our means as only lent to us for the purpose of doing the greatest possible amount of good which they are capable of effecting; we shall find that instead of its being the mere indulgence of a natural impulse, to give, it is often the study of a lifetime to learn how to give judiciously.

To judge by the frequency of its practice, one would suppose that one of the most approved methods of serving the poor, was to give away at the door pieces of broken or otherwise objectionable food. Yet I am disposed to think that, upon the whole, more harm than good results from this practice; for, to say nothing of the temptation it offers to the poor to exaggerate their own wants and sufferings, the temptation to servants is no trifling one, to be perpetually adding to the charitable hoard, what a little ingenuity or care might have converted into a wholesome or palatable dish. Besides which it is impossible that any family should be able to furnish a regular supply of such food, and the disappointment of the really destitute must be very great, on those days when they are obliged to return home to set down to an empty table, or perhaps to go supperless to bed. In addition to which objections, we may safely add, that the fewer supplicants and hangers-

about, to be found at our doors, the better. Those are seldom the most needy who ask assistance in this way, and happily for our benevolence, there are innumerable channels now open, through which we may at least endeavor to do good with less probability of doing harm.

In the exercise of kindness to the poor, care is often necessary to avoid falling into popular mistakes with regard to the merit of certain cases, which after all frequently consists in nothing more than a few circumstances of interest attaching to them. The tide of fashion, when it takes a charitable course, will sometimes pour a perfect flood of benefits upon certain individuals, to the neglect of others equally deserving, and perhaps more in need. But the mistress of a family, whose mind is well governed, will be her own judge in such matters, and not allowing either indolence or self-indulgence to stand in her way, nor even deputing the task to others, she will, as far as it is possible to do so, examine the case for herself, in order that she may not be led away by the partial statements or highly colored representations of her friends.

For all the purposes of benevolence, she will also keep a separate provision, and separate accounts, in order to ascertain at the end of the year, or at any particular time, what has been the exact proportion of her resources thus distributed. Without this kind of record, we are apt sometimes to fancy we have been more generous than is really the case; or, on the other hand, we may have been liberal beyond what was just, for it is not the number of cases we relieve, which has to be considered, so much as the due proportion of our means which is bestowed upon charitable purposes.

When the duty of benevolence, extended through offices of charity, is considered in this light, as being no duty in some cases, and in others one of serious extent and responsibility, and thus bearing, through all the intermediate degrees between these two extremes, exact reference to our pecuniary means, to our situation in life, and to the

number of relative claims we have to fulfil, it will easily be seen, that to lay down any precise rules for the amount of money which ought to be expended in charity, would be presuming upon an extent of knowledge which no single individual can possess. Besides which, there are so many ways of doing good, that benevolent feeling can often find free exercise through channels which could scarcely be considered as belonging to what is generally understood by charity.

But while perfectly aware that little can be done in the way of benefiting our fellow-creatures, without regard to their spiritual welfare, I own I am one of those who would wish that the bodies, as well as the souls of the poor might be cared for; nor can I think they would be less likely to attend to instruction, for being comfortably clothed and sufficiently fed.

The mistress of a family, when truly benevolent, will not rest satisfied with merely giving to the poor. She will visit them in their dwellings, make herself acquainted with their habits, characters, and circumstances: and while urging upon them their religious duties, or recommending such means of religious instruction as may be within their reach, her own experience in the practice of economy will enable her occasionally to throw in a few useful hints on the best method of employing their scanty means, so as that every thing may be turned to the most useful account. Assistance of this kind, judiciously and kindly given, is often more valuable than money would be without it; and those who have but little to give, may often, by such means, extend their influence to as wide a circle of usefulness, as if they had thousands at their disposal.

The indigent and the suffering are often good judges of what is real, and what is pretended sympathy, or of what is meant for kindness, without sympathy at all. Thus the most sincere and fervent zeal for their spiritual improvement often fails to produce any effect, simply from the fact of little attention being paid to their temporal affairs, or only such as they can perceive at once to be un-

accompanied by any feeling of sympathy. It is a happy constitution of mind, therefore, which has been given to woman, no doubt for holy and benevolent purposes, which enables her with a quick and sensitive feeling to enter into all the minutæ of daily experience, without interruption to those higher aims which must occupy the supreme attention of every Christian woman in her intercourse with those who are brought under her influence or her care.

The advantages of adaptation are never more felt than in our association with the poor. By a look or a tone, they may be attracted or repelled. Yet how little do some worthy people think of this, when they speak to the poor in an authoritative, or disrespectful manner! It is good to bear about with us the remembrance of this fact—that we have no more right to be rude to the poor than to the rich. Even as regards household servants, so strong is the feeling of that class of persons in this respect, that I believe mistresses who never deviate from a proper manner of speaking themselves, have seldom occasion to complain that their servants speak improperly to them.

In every mistress of a family, the poor of her immediate neighborhood should feel that they have a friend, and where the principle of benevolence has been strongly implanted in the heart, such a mistress will esteem this consideration too high a privilege to allow any regard for mere personal interest to interfere with the just discharge of so sacred a trust. Yet to befriend the poor substantially, and with reference to their ultimate good, all who have made the experiment will allow to be a difficult, as well as a sacred duty, requiring much patience, forbearance, and equanimity of mind, with much confidence in a superintending Providence, and faith in Him who chose his own disciples among the poor.

That benevolence which commences its career with high expectations of reward in this world, is sure to be withered by disappointment. Indeed, there is so much to dis-

courage the exercise of charity for the sake of producing great and conspicuous results, that most persons who begin upon this principle, end by having their temper soured, their confidence destroyed, and their minds embittered by uncharitable feelings towards their fellow-creatures in general. "The poor are so ungrateful," is their frequent remark— "so dishonest, so requiring; there is no pleasure in doing any thing for them." But how different is the spirit which prompts these complaints, from that of the Bible, where the poor are mentioned in almost every page, and where the duty of kindness and consideration towards them is enforced upon the simple ground of their being *poor*, without regard to any other merit or demerit whatever!

Nor is it to the poor alone, but towards her fellow-creatures in general, that the woman who undertakes the superintendence of a family, should cultivate feelings of kindness and benevolence. Men, engaged in the active affairs of life, have neither time nor opportunity for those innumerable little acts of consideration which come within the sphere of female duty, nor are they by nature so fitted as woman for entering into the peculiarities of personal feeling, so as to enable them to sympathize with the suffering or the distressed. But woman, in the happiest exercise of her natural endowments, enjoys all those requisites which are combined in a real friend; and as such she ought always to be regarded at the head of her domestic establishment—a friend with whom all within the reach of her influence may feel that their interests are safe—a friend in whose sympathy all may share, and in whose charity all may find a place. No one, however, can be such a friend as this, without having cultivated benevolent dispositions towards the human race in general, without feeling that all are members of one great family, only differently placed for a short period of their existence, and that all are objects of kindness and care to the same heavenly Father.

CHAP. XI.

TREATMENT OF SERVANTS AND DEPENDANTS.

IF, as soon as a woman marries, she has the services of domestic assistants at her command, she has also devolving upon her the responsibility of their comfort and their general welfare ; and it is a serious thought that she cannot, by any means, escape from this responsibility, whatever may, in other respects, be the privileges and indulgences of her situation. Neither the affection of her husband nor the kindness of her friends can do any thing to relieve her here, except only so far as their advice may aid her judgment ; but as the mistress of a house she must be the one responsible being for the habits, and, in a great measure, for the circumstances of those who are placed under her care.

By the thoughtless or inexperienced it may be asked how this should be, since servants are expected to care for us, not we for them ? Such, however, is not the language of a Christian woman, with whom it will be impossible to forget that her influence and example must unavoidably give a tone to the character of her whole household ; and if there be no solicitude for a bias to be given towards what is good, it must unavoidably be towards what is evil. It is morally impossible that it should be neither one way nor the other, because the very time which a servant spends beneath a master's roof, will, of necessity, be confirming old habits, if not spent in acquiring new ones ; and thus while fondly persuading yourself that because you are doing nothing you cannot be doing harm, you may, in reality, be guilty of the sin of omission, which, in cases of moral responsibility, is often of the most serious consequence.

It is too frequently considered that servants are a class of persons merely subject to our authority. Could we regard them more as placed under our influence, we should take a wider and more enlightened view of our own responsibilities with regard to them. And after all, it is influence rather than authority which governs a household ; not but

that every mistress has a right to expect implicit obedience, all neglect of which is injurious to both the parties concerned, and in order to enforce which, her orders should always be given in as clear and decided a manner as possible, leaving nothing, except where it is absolutely necessary, to contingencies, and nothing to the choice of the servant herself, unless good reasons should be adduced for a change of purpose ; and then the orders of the mistress should be so worded as to make the purpose her own, and not to allow the servant an opportunity of feeling that she has overruled the plans of her mistress, and in reality substituted her own.

Where the mistress is an ignorant one, these points of observance are very difficult to maintain, and the habit of giving foolish orders, inconvenient or impossible to be executed, and of finding that her servant is capable of proposing what is at once more reasonable and much to be preferred, will, in all probability, reduce her to a mere nonentity as regards authority in her kitchen, and may ultimately be the cause of her withdrawing from all interference there.

But necessary as it is that a mistress should be implicitly obeyed, I repeat, that it is not by mere authority that a household can be well governed ; because there are innumerable ways in which servants can deceive without being detected, and carry on their own schemes while they appear to be adopting those of a mistress ; it is, therefore, by no other means than by the establishment of mutual feelings of confidence and respect, that we can hope to be as faithfully served when absent, as when inspecting our affairs in person ; and as I have already said that a kitchen can never be the proper element for an enlightened woman to live in, the greater confidence she feels in a right system being carried on there, the more leisure she will possess for other avocations, and the more happiness she will enjoy.

The question then arises, how is this right understanding, and this perfect confidence to be attained ? I answer, first, by respecting the rights of servants, and secondly, by atten-

tion to their interests. There are certain duties which you have a right to require of them, and among them is implicit obedience ; but there are also many things which even though they might greatly promote your convenience, you have no right to require. You have no right to require a reduction of wages below what you first agreed to give, or indeed, any deviation from what was stipulated for in that agreement. And here it may be well to observe, that all particular requirements with regard to dress and personal habits, should be mentioned at that time, so that no disappointments or disputes may afterwards arise. Notes should also be made of such arrangements, with the time of hiring, and the rate of wages : and when all these things in the beginning are clearly stated, and fully understood, it may tend greatly to the prevention of unpleasant consequences.

Whatever your own circumstances may be, it is the right of your servants to have a sufficiency of rest, and of wholesome food ; and even in cases of sickness, or other exigency, you have no right to *require* that either should be given up ; to request it as a kindness, is the only proper manner in which a servant should be brought to make such concessions ; and we have often a beautiful example for imitation in the perfect willingness with which, when thus treated, they will deny themselves personal indulgence, more especially sit up night after night with the sick, without in the intermediate times neglecting their daily work.

It is a delicate part of good management, but a very important one in maintaining influence, to keep always clear distinctions on these points, and not even to *demand* the pillow from the servant's bed, remembering that all things essential to their daily sustenance and nightly rest, have been stipulated for in your first agreement, and that your servants are consequently under no greater obligation than other members of your family, to give up what may be classed under the head of bed or board. But I must again observe, that there is a manner of *requesting* these things to be done, when required on

any extraordinary occasion, which seldom meets with a refusal, or even with an unwilling compliance.

A certain degree of care of your servants' health is a species of kindness which they always feel gratefully, and which is no more than ought to be shown by the mistress towards every member of her household. Indeed it is impossible to imagine a kind-hearted woman neglecting the pallid looks, and languid movements of those who are spending their strength in her service ; and if she be at the same time a lover of justice, she will remember that the bodily exercise necessary for carrying on household labor during the day, requires a greater interval of rest than such occupations as are generally carried on in the drawing-room. Instead of which, how often do we find those on whom devolves the burden of this labor, required to rise two or three hours earlier than their mistress, and kept up at night as late as any of the household !—kept up perhaps to wait for the return of visitors, when another member of the family, allowed to rest longer in the morning, might as well have done so in their stead—kept up on a cold winter's night to warm a bed, which the indulgent occupant might more properly have warmed herself, unless she had chosen to retire earlier—or kept up perhaps until a late hour for family worship ; a practice which requires no further comment, than to say, that except on very extraordinary occasions, or where great allowance is made in the morning for rest, no servants ought to be expected to attend family worship after ten at night.

By allowing, and even requiring your servants to retire early, you have a right to expect their services early in the morning, without which, no household can be properly conducted ; for when the day commences with hurry and confusion in order to overtake lost time, the same state of things, only aggravated by its unavoidable tendency to call forth evil tempers, impatient expressions, and angry retorts, will in all probability continue until the end of the day. And here we see, as in thousands of instances besides, the

importance of making ourselves acquainted with what belongs to nature, and especially that of the human heart. We may compel an outward observance of the laws we lay down for our own families, but we cannot compel such feelings to go along with their observance, as alone can render it of any lasting benefit either to our servants or ourselves. Thus by rendering our service an irksome one, or in other words, not attending to what the constitution of human nature requires, we effectually destroy our good influence; and if by bringing religion into the same hard service, we render it an irksome restraint, the mischief we do by this means may be as fearful in its extent, as it is serious and important in its character. But of this, more in another chapter.

The same care which is exercised with regard to your servants' health, should be extended to their habits in general, and even to cases in which their good alone is concerned; for it is an act of injustice to complain of the habits of this class of persons, without doing your part to form, upon better principles, those which come within the sphere of your influence. It is often objected to this duty, that nothing can be done for the good of young servants, so long as they are encouraged at home in what is foolish and wrong. The mothers then are clearly to blame; and certainly the mothers in many poor families are bad enough. But who made the mothers what they are, or helped to make them so? Unquestionably the negligent, injudicious, or unprincipled mistresses under whose influence their early lives were spent.

And have you not then sufficient regard for the welfare of future generations to begin a new system, by which the errors of the last may be corrected? For the little thoughtless girl just entering beneath your roof—the young nursery-maid—she of whom nobody thinks, except to find fault when she has done wrong—she who perhaps never thinks herself, except to contrive how she shall manage to purchase a ribbon like that upon her mistress's cap—this very girl is gradually experiencing under your influence, and, nom-

inally at least, under your care, that great and important change of thought, feeling, and habit, which is not improperly called the formation of character; and this girl will consequently take away with her whatever bias she receives either from your neglect, or your attentions, first into other families, and then into her own, where she herself will probably in her turn have to train up children both for this world and the next.

Will the wives of England then think me very extravagant in my notions of what is due towards servants, when I propose to those in the middle class of society, that as Christian women they should consider such young servants as placed peculiarly under their care; because it is only by beginning early, that that great and radical change can be effected in the habits and character of servants generally, which all unite in considering as so urgently required.

If a mistress would really do this, and I cannot see how any responsible person so circumstanced is justified in neglecting it, she would consider that some oversight of her servants' wardrobe was absolutely necessary; and as they grow older, and come to be intrusted with money of their own, the same oversight should extend to their manner of spending it. It is an excellent thing when servants are allowed time for making their own clothes, and it is no mean occupation for the mistress of a house to teach them how to do so. I speak on the supposition that she is acquainted with this art herself, for I cannot imagine the education of an English woman in the middle class of society complete, without her having become familiar with the art of making every article of dress she wears. Not that she is under any obligation to continue the practice of making her own clothes; that is a totally different matter; but as this class of women are situated, and taking into account all the probabilities of change of circumstance, failure of health, or failure of pecuniary means, I am convinced that no one could have to regret, while thousands might have to rejoice, at having acquired in early life an art so capable of

being made useful both to themselves and others.

I believe that one half of the forlornness, discomfort, and apparent destitution of the poor around us, arises, not so much from absolute want of means, as from the absence of all knowledge of this kind. They are unfortunately but too ready to imitate us in our love of finery, our extravagance, and self-indulgence; and it is a serious question whether they discover any thing else in us which they can imitate; but let them see our economy, our industry, our contrivance, and our solicitude to turn every thing to the best account, and I believe they would not be slow to imitate these habits as well as the others.

The art of mending, for instance, though most important to the poor, is one in which they are lamentably deficient; and so much waste, disorder, and slovenliness, are the consequence of not being able to mend skilfully, that this department of neatness and economy is one in which all young servants should be carefully instructed; more especially as the making-up of new clothes is a much easier, as well as generally more agreeable task, than that of mending old ones, so that they look respectable to the last.

By this kind of oversight of her servants' wardrobe, a kind-hearted and judicious mistress may easily obtain some direction in the expenditure of their money, and in nothing is assistance to the poorer classes more necessary than in this. Servants generally are pleased to have the approbation of a beloved and respected mistress in those cases over which she does not assume any direct authority; and they would be equally mortified to find they had incurred her disapprobation by the purchase of what was worthless, or unbefitting their situation. By this means, too, mistresses would generally be better able than they are, to understand what is sufficient, and consequently what is just, with regard to wages; for while, on the one hand, some require their servants always to look respectable without allowing them the means to do so, others are induced by fashion or custom

to give higher wages than are really any benefit to the receiver.

But the variety of instances are too numerous to specify, in which the Christian care and oversight of a good mistress may be invaluable to a young servant. I will mention but one more, and that of greater importance than any which have yet fallen under our consideration. I mean the preservation of young servants from circumstances of exposure or temptation.

Those who have never lived in large towns, and especially in London, would scarcely give credit to the facts, were they told the number of instances in which servants are brought from the country, and being obliged, from illness or some other cause, to leave their employers, are allowed to be cast upon the mercy of the public, friendless and destitute, and too often a prey to the cruel deceptions which are practised upon young females thus situated. Some of the most painful among the many distressing circumstances which come under the notice of those Christian ladies who have the oversight of female penitentiaries, are cases in which country servants have been brought to town, and having lost their health, or suffered from accident, have been placed in hospitals, and left there without regard to their future destiny; when, on coming out, they have found that all clue was lost to their former masters or mistresses, and that they were consequently alone in the streets of London, without money, without friends, and without the knowledge of any respectable place in which they might find shelter.

It may be said that these are extreme cases, but it is lamentably true that these, and others of similar neglect, are not so rare as persons would suppose who are unacquainted with the practices of our large towns.

Another evil against which mistresses ought to be especially on their guard, is the introduction of unprincipled char-women, or other assistants, into their families. In the country it is comparatively easy to ascertain what is the general moral character

of those around us ; but in large towns this knowledge is more difficult to acquire, and incalculable mischief has often been the consequence of associating young servants with persons of this description.

The practice of sending out young female servants late at night, to bring home any members of the family who may be out visiting, or placing them in any other manner unnecessarily in circumstances of exposure, are considerations to which we ought not to be indifferent ; and the mistress who allows her servant to be thus circumstanced, would do well to ask herself how she would like a young sister, or a daughter, to be placed in a similar situation. Can it be that youth has not as strong a claim to our protection in the lower as in the higher walks of life ? Can it be that innocence is not as precious to the poor as to the rich ? Did the case admit of any degree of comparison, I should say that it was more so ; for what has a poor girl but her character to depend upon ? Or when once the stigma of having deviated from the strict line of propriety attaches to her name, who is there to defend her from the consequences ? Her future lot will in all probability be to become the wife of some poor and hard-working man, whose whole amount of worldly wealth will be comprised in the respectability of his humble home. Who then, through indifference or neglect, would allow a shadow to steal in, still less a blight to fall, where, in spite of poverty, in spite of trial, in spite of all those hardships which are the inevitable portion of the man who earns his bread by the labor of his hands, his home might still be an earthly paradise to him ?

Young women of a higher grade in society, or those who are more properly called ladies, being all taught in the great school of polished society, acquire the same habits of decorum, and even of modesty, to a certain extent ; and the restrictions of society rendering it more painful to deviate from such habits, than to maintain them through life, we come, very naturally, to look upon them rather as a matter of course than as a merit.

But in the modesty of a poor young girl there is inexpressible beauty, because we know that it must arise from the right feelings of her heart ; and none who are capable of truly estimating this charm, would for the wealth of worlds be the cause of its being lost.

It is a common saying with servants, that they do not fear work if well treated ; and I believe such little acts of consideration as the heart of a kind mistress will naturally suggest, may be made to go much further in stimulating them to a right performance of their duty, than either high wages or great personal indulgence. A little consideration shown for their wishes, where the matter is one of little moment to their employers, is felt by them as a real kindness, and often abundantly rewarded by their willingness and alacrity in doing whatever is required of them.

An instance was once brought painfully under my notice, where the mistress of a house and some of her family were consulting about whether a servant should be sent to a neighboring town before, or after, dinner. They themselves appearing to have no choice, it was suggested by another party, that the servant would prefer going in the afternoon. "He prefer it, indeed !" exclaimed the lady of the house ; "then for that reason he shall go in the morning." When it is added, that the lady was a most kind, and in many respects, truly excellent character, this fact is difficult to believe ; and I am only induced to state it as a striking proof to what an extent benevolent feeling may be restrained in its exercise, by the habit of thinking that servants are merely passive instruments upon which authority ought to be exercised ; and that, consequently, all pretension on their part to an equality of feeling with ourselves, as regards what is agreeable or otherwise, ought to be put down by the most prompt and decided measures.

After all, however, it must be allowed, that there are some servants, and perhaps not a few, who cannot, by the best and most judicious treatment, be moulded to our wishes ; and with regard to these, if the case is a de-

cided one, that they can neither do good to us, nor we to them, the sooner we get rid of them the better. Before deciding too hastily to part with a servant, we should, however, call into exercise all the charity we can, by remembering how different their education and early treatment have been from ours, and if we cannot on this ground forgive them some faults, either they or we must be wrong indeed.

Again, there may have been faults on our side as well as theirs. We may have been too lax in our discipline, for kindness ceases to be such when it degenerates into negligence. Thus, to permit servants to feel that there are in your household departments of duty which you never superintended, and places and things secure from your inspection, is allowing them a license which few are so conscientious as not, in some measure, to abuse. It may happen too, that you have been expecting regularity from them, while you have failed to practise it yourself; or, that you have been requiring neatness, order, and punctuality, when your own example, on these points of observance, has been far from corresponding with your precepts and injunctions.

That care should be exercised not to part too hastily with servants, is as much for the interest of one party as another; since the distinction of a bad name as a mistress, is sure to be felt in its natural consequence of preventing good servants seeking employment under such direction. It is in the power of all mistresses to make it a privilege to live with them; but still, even this privilege will occasionally be abused. There are cases too, in which the natural dispositions of the two parties are not suited; and there is such a thing as a mistress becoming afraid of her servant—afraid to thwart her plans, or afraid to enforce others; and where such is the feeling, whatever may be the excellences of the servant, that she is not in her proper place with such a mistress, is sufficiently evident.

Instances of dishonesty, or other cases of serious moral delinquency, I have not deem-

ed it necessary to mention, because all must be aware of the importance of treating them in an equitable and summary manner. The only thing to be observed in relation to these is, that the evidence upon which we act should be clear and decisive.

In all cases of dissatisfaction, it is good to bear in mind the familiar and true maxim, that "good mistresses make good servants;" and that with persons who are constantly changing, some fault must rest with themselves—some fault attributable either to mismanagement or neglect—some fault arising either from too great indulgence, or too great severity, or perhaps from a mixture of both. And I am strongly disposed to think, that independently of such faults, many of the grievances we complain of in our domestic affairs, and especially those which arise out of the foolish, perverse, or unprincipled conduct of our servants, might be obviated by more careful attention being paid to the formation of their character when young.

That a better system is also required with regard to the practice of giving characters to servants, is universally allowed; yet few persons seem to have the moral courage to begin with a plan, which shall at once be more just to the employers and the employed. This weakness of purpose originates, no doubt, in an amiable feeling of anxiety, lest, by speaking of our servants as we have really found them, we should deprive them of a future home. The case unquestionably has its difficulties, yet as a moral obligation, it must be allowed, that the sooner we begin to act fairly and honestly, the better it will ultimately be, both for ourselves and those with whom we are associated; and there can be no doubt, that the confidence all servants feel in being able to obtain what is called a character, so long as they have not been really dishonest, insolent, or disobedient, renders them more careless than they otherwise would be, of those minor points of domestic duty, which, taken as a whole, form an aggregate of considerable importance to those who engage their services. This, then, is one of those cases, in which the Wives of

England are called upon to assist each other, not only in making a strong determination, but in acting upon it, so far as to break through a popular and long-established practice, by speaking of servants, when asked for their character, in such terms as they really deserve; without reference to their worldly interests, or indeed to any thing but the simple truth. If by such means a few of them should be longer than they now are in obtaining situations, a great many would be more careful to fill their places to the satisfaction of the families by whom they are employed; and thus honesty would be found in the end, as it always is, to be the best policy.

In addition to household servants, many married women have devolving upon them the serious responsibility of caring for apprentices, or other assistants in the way of business; and in the discharge of these duties, it is most important for all who are thus circumstanced to ask themselves, whether they are acting upon the golden rule of doing to others what they would that others should do to them, or to those in whom they are most warmly interested. If they are, their merit is great, and there can be no doubt but their reward will be so too; for we must all allow, that it requires no ordinary share of kind feeling, or of Christian principle, to do all which a high sense of duty requires in this respect.

There are many reasons why the task is difficult—almost too difficult for mere human nature to perform; and it is not the least of these, that most young men who begin to learn a business, enter as strangers into a family at an age when they have little to recommend them as companions, except to their own associates, or to a partial parent; yet at that precise time of their lives, when the formation of their habits and character requires the strictest care. It is easy to imagine that few women would prefer spending much of their time with youths of fifteen, or eighteen years of age, in connection with whom they have no family tie, or strong connecting interest; but why, on the other hand,

the wife of a man who is engaged in business, to the successful pursuit of which she owes all her pecuniary advantages, should hold herself above her husband's clerks or apprentices, I never could distinctly see; more especially as time was when her own husband was thus situated, and most probably time will be, when her sons will be the same.

Is it possible, then, that a mother thus circumstanced can look with indifference to the future, when the happy boy who plays beside her, the joy of her own heart, and the pride of his father's—the spirited handsome fellow who carries away the prizes at his school, and lords it over his playmates, and only softens into tenderness when he sees his mother's tears—is it possible that she can think with indifference of the time when he shall be old enough to go out into a stranger's family—nay, actually be bound there for a term of years, and thus inwrought as it were with the entire fabric of a new order of domestic arrangements, yet notwithstanding all this, made to sit apart, and to feel that he is not only an alien but an absolute intruder, as regards the mistress of that family and her friends? Could the fond mother follow her boy when thus circumstanced up to his own bedroom in the attic, and see how often, for want of a welcome at the household hearth, he sits there upon his box, and reads the books he brought from home, at the risk of being chidden for the light he has kept burning;—could she see the far-off way in which he sits at the family board, satisfying his hunger according to necessity, not choice;—could she see the manner in which, from the very overflow of the life of his young spirit he is driven down and compelled to make merry with associates unfitted to himself, at least to that self with which he was identified in his father's home, but which he has almost ceased to remember now;—could she hear when he speaks how his voice is becoming gradually habituated to the utterance of low thoughts and words which never formed a part of the language of his home;—but beyond all this—could she see his Sabbaths—

his days of rest—those happy days, when the members of his father's family used all to be united in equality of feeling, and solicitous only to give precedence to each other,—could she behold him walking the streets of some great town, and for want of home-attractions, for want of cordiality and welcome at his master's fireside, familiarizing himself with the sinful practices of others similarly circumstanced;—could the mother, beholding all this, trace out its fearful and degrading consequences upon the future destiny of her boy, she would be ready to exclaim to the mistress of that household—"Save my child!"

Should any such appeal be made, the mistress of that family would in all probability reply with indignation—"The young men employed in my husband's business enjoy the very best of food, they are not required to work beyond the hours agreed upon, and their sleeping-rooms are healthy and well furnished." And all this may be strictly true, yet the mother's heart may be unsatisfied, for she knows, and we all know, that it is possible to be well cared for as regards the body, and yet be made to feel most destitute. We all know that there is a kind of treatment which elevates the moral feelings, and another which degrades them, rendering the spirit upon which it operates, grovelling, servile, mean. And if this powerful influence should be made to weigh upon, and bear down the buoyant mind of youth, what must we expect, after such treatment, will be the downward tendency of old age?

But is it possible, we ask again, that the mother whose natural instinct renders her so keenly alive to all these feelings as regards her own child, can be insensible to the claims of others?—can be induced by her own pride or her own selfishness to trample under foot the high moral obligation laid upon her, to be as a mother to her own household, but especially to the young, remembering that they will go forth into the world bearing the seal upon their foreheads of her maternal care, or of her most culpable neglect? Nor is this all. She must remember, too, that these very youths are to constitute in after

life that strong phalanx of respectability, in whose moral power are vested the interests of the people, and the welfare of the state. Is it right then—is it just—is it politic—that during five or seven long years of the lives of such men—years in which the most lasting impressions they ever will receive, are made upon their minds—is it right, or in any way to be reconciled to English women, that for this portion of their lives they should be subjected to a system of moral discipline, calculated, in almost every way, to lower them as future citizens of the world?

But it is not always thus. There are noble and beautiful instances of women who absolutely could not live upon such terms; warm-hearted, patriotic women, who cannot sit down to their own tables without a cordial welcome for every one entitled to a place at the same board—who, putting aside all personal feeling, can even make friends of such associates, remembering that to their parents and their country they are in a great measure responsible for the high or low position such men may take in after life. Yes, we are happy in believing there are those who would willingly bear all the annoyance or restraint of such society, were it tenfold greater than it is, rather than be the cause of one young man being drawn out from home to seek enjoyment, or down into a lower grade of social fellowship, for a freedom and a cordiality which he could not find with her.

Contemptuously as young men will often speak of the influence and the habits of women in general, I believe there are few who may not in the early part of their lives, be more easily influenced by women than by men—by judicious women, I mean, for, notwithstanding the absurdities of which some youths are guilty themselves, they appear to be instinctively quick-sighted to the absurdities of others, and especially to those of woman. In fact, they seem glad to lay hold of any excuse for despising them, and, even where they feel the greatest respect, will seldom acknowledge it openly or directly. But for all this, the cautious and well-ordered treatment of women tells upon their charac-

ters in the end ; and by a little good-natured falling-in with their humors, a little forbearance under the infliction of their annoyances, a little good sense, and a great deal of cheerfulness, an amiable woman will seldom fail to obtain, even without the assumption of any direct authority, an extensive influence over the young men with whom she is associated.

For this reason, and because the master of a family with whom it rests to exercise real authority cannot so well unbend, and make himself familiar with the young people under his direction, the claims of this part of the community are strong upon the wives of England, who as they value the comfort of their own sons, and estimate with regard to them the advantages of a high moral standard, can surely not forget the interests of the stranger's son committed to their care.

The same observations apply with equal force to dependants of every description, excepting only that those who are not bound, may be considered as at liberty to find situations more suited to their ideas of comfort.

But, above all others, the class of destitute or homeless relatives are most entitled to our consideration and kindness. Yet such is the weakness of human nature in cases of severe or protracted trial, that the good and the happiness of all parties seem to require as little mixing up as possible in the same household, of rich and poor relations. When the poor have to be provided for by more affluent relatives, it is better—far better, to do this at a distance, or at least not associated as one family ; though such needful precaution has nothing whatever to do with the kindness which may often be most appropriately extended towards them as guests, or indeed as members of the same family for a limited period.

In all such cases, there are difficulties to be contended with on both sides, owing to the natural tendency in one party to suspect or imagine slights, and in the other to apprehend or resist encroachments. One half of these, however, I am fully persuaded, might be obviated by a candid and delicate mode of behavior on the part of the mistress of a

house who entertains such relatives as guests. Her behavior must be delicate in the extreme, because she has to do with those whose peculiar situation renders them more than commonly susceptible of pain : and it must be candid ; because in all such cases the habit of leaving things to be understood is the surest way to produce misunderstandings. Still, the delicacy which would make no difference be felt, would fail in its object to do good ; because as the world considers there is a vast difference between abundant and slender pecuniary means, there could be no kindness in persuading those who are but scantily supplied in this respect, that they are to mix in society upon the same terms as the rich ; and more especially after one or more generations have marked this difference between them and their relatives by stronger characters.

While it is left to all persons to decide according to their own judgment to what extent they will cultivate the acquaintance of their poorer relatives, the manner of doing this admits of no doubt ; for to receive them as guests without a welcome, is at once a breach of justice and of hospitality. The welcome then which I would earnestly recommend, is one which sets them perfectly at ease as to any fear of intrusion, and which does away with all idea that personally they are considered as inferiors by the mistress of the house ; though at the same time her behavior should be such as to assist them in marking out for their safety, in associating with others, those delicate distinctions, upon the nice observance of which so much of their comfort and respectability depends. By encouraging them to trust implicitly to her candor in expressing her wishes respecting them, she may, as the mistress of a house, be enabled to become a real friend to a class of persons whose claims are perhaps the strongest of any upon our sympathy and consideration. For let the case be our own—let the lapse of time as it passes over our family connections leave us alone to struggle with a tide of adverse circumstances ; while those who originally branched off from the

same root are basking in the sunshine of prosperity—let us ask of our own hearts, whether we should not sometimes feel it hard to be shut out from their indulgences, and thrust down as it were into a lower grade of society altogether, without any fault of our own.

Nor is it so much the fact itself, as the accompaniments of this fact, which we should feel it hard to bear—the willingness of our relations to forget us—their cold or forced civilities when we claimed their attention, compared with the warmth of their emotions towards those who were more distinguished than ourselves—the situations they might point out to us as eligible, but which they would almost die rather than occupy—the times they would choose for inviting us, when no one else was likely to appear—the multitude of things reserved for us to do, when our health required that we should have perfect rest—all which are perfectly natural, and might easily occur without any accompaniment of unkind feeling. Yet, these are only small items of a vast sum, like grains of dust in the long wearisome and humiliating path, which the poor relation must tread in associating with the rich.

In all such circumstances, how much may the facts themselves be ameliorated to the sufferer by the kind and cordial treatment of the mistress of a family, and especially by one whose high sense of justice and generosity admits of no half welcomes beneath her roof! Such a mistress will consider the poor relative as peculiarly under her protection, to guard from slights, to bring forward as occasion may invite, to keep back as circumstances may require, and to render comfortable and at ease whatever may occur. And if in the contemplation of this duty, in addition to those already dwelt upon in this chapter, the English wife should fear that her time will be so occupied in thinking of others, as to leave none for thinking of herself, she must remember, that by these means she will gather around her a strong phalanx of friends, whose love and gratitude will leave her little to wish for, which it is in their power

to supply; and beyond this, she will find that by the same means she has been put in possession of one of the great secrets of human happiness—that of making others happy.

CHAPTER XII.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE.

VISITING, and receiving visits, being regarded by some married women as among the most important avocations of life, it may possibly to such individuals imply an ignorance of the claims of society, when I venture to hint at the probability of this being one of the peculiar temptations against which women in general would do wisely to be on their guard, especially against acquiring a habit of visiting, as a means of escape from the dullness and monotony of their own firesides.

It needs but little acquaintance with domestic duty, to know that there must be something wrong in the home of that woman who is always leaving it; although, on the other hand, few persons would recommend exclusive confinement to the same narrow sphere of thought and action, in which we exist at home. It is good to go out into society sometimes, in order that we may return with the greater relish; but a still more extensive amount of good is derived from what we may learn in mixed society, and sometimes even from the humblest individuals we meet with there.

It must, however, depend much upon ourselves, whether we go out prepared to make visiting a wholesome refreshment to the mind, or a means of collecting and disseminating low ideas with regard to our own affairs, and those of our neighbors. When a married woman goes out intent upon reckoning the cost of the entertainment she partakes of, upon comparing her neighbor's furniture with her own, but especially upon depreciating the excellence of all which falls under her notice, it may safely be said that she would

have been better at home ; but when she goes out with a desire to extend her kindly feelings towards her fellow-creatures in general, to learn from others, and to impart knowledge in return ; or, in other words, to do and receive good in any way that may open, she will seldom have the mortification of returning home weary and dispirited, or wishing she had never gone.

But pleasant as this kind of refreshment may occasionally be, and necessary as it is sometimes to mix with others in order to have our views enlarged, and our prejudices rubbed off, the woman who makes it the chief business of her life to visit and receive company, will have committed a lamentable mistake by getting married ; for this business might unquestionably have been carried on in her single state with as much enjoyment to herself, and with far less injury to the happiness of others. Whatever is done by a married woman in the way of duty, must have reference to others, and more especially to those with whom she is most intimately connected ; how then can it be promoting their interests, or making their welfare the chief object of desire, for her to be bestowing her time, her intelligence—nay, all that is pleasing in her manners, and interesting in her character, upon comparative strangers ; while her lassitude, weariness, and exhaustion, the natural effects of too much excitement, are brought home to her own family, and unsparingly indulged before them.

There are probably few English wives who would really wish to enter at once upon so unnatural a way of living ; but there are unfortunately too many, who from want of firmness to resist temptation, as well as prudence and discernment to foresee what consequences must inevitably follow certain acts, are drawn into that vortex of dissipation apparently against their will, and, if one could really believe their protestations, still more decidedly against their inclinations.

There is no more curious phenomenon, presented by human life, than that of innumerable multitudes of persons doing every day, towards each other, with every demon-

stration of delight, what one half at least of the same individuals declare themselves to be doing with the utmost unwillingness, and even with dislike. In nothing is this more striking than in the ceremony of making morning calls. The devices which are practised to escape from callers, on the one hand, and to call upon persons who are not at home, on the other, might put to shame the warmest advocate for keeping up these forms of polished life. For let the whole nation, as with one stout heart, determine to speak the truth, and say exactly what degree of willingness is really felt to go out and make these calls, or to stay at home and receive them, and let the willingness thus avowed, be made the rule of their future conduct, what an immense amount of precious time would thus be rescued from worse than waste !

Nor is it the absolute calls themselves, which constitute the whole objection to the practice as it is now carried on, for every mistress of a family addicted to this practice, knows that there are two or three good hours—nay, actually the very best of every day, which she can never call her own, and which she consequently makes no attempt to spend in any rational or useful manner. If any thing within the sphere of her duties has really to be done, it must be hurried through between, perhaps, a late breakfast, and the arrival of those few early callers, who come on business, or who really wish to find the lady of the house at home. When these are gone, the first part of the farce commences, and if the after scenes could be made to vary so as to develop what was interesting or new, there would perhaps be less objection to the whole. But, unfortunately, having gone through one set of observations, one series of little surprises at the intelligence of the day, one succession of animated smiles, and expressions of profound interest, no sooner is another guest announced, than the lady of the house has to be just as much astonished at the news, and just as much startled at each item of intelligence, as if she had never heard it before—just as much pleased to receive the twentieth caller as the first, and al-

in all probability no single truth has led her with which she was not all the acquainted, no new idea developed, feeling, except weariness, excited, she remain until the last as fascinating, us, and apparently delighted, as she first.

If this is not hard labor, I am ignorant what labor is. If this is not waste of am ignorant what is its use. If this a weariness and degradation to the am ignorant on that point too. Although, however, that calls are necessary, a do not pretend to dispute, allowing also some particular portion of each day be appropriated to that purpose, what would ask, would result to society in, from having that time compressed space of one hour each day. It is at by this means many callers would have to be introduced at the same at here would be the great advantage, the same common-place remarks would all at once, the same little starts of assent, the same expression of interest; up the face, and beyond this, the delighted welcome for the many, eminence in one, might have a better chance of really cordial and sincere. In addition to the advantages, every married woman have the privilege of fixing her own as a generally understood thing, so that household arrangements might be made snugly; and time comparatively secure thus be left for pursuing any more important avocations without fear of interrup-

now appeal to the wives of England, or the carrying out of such a plan not be felt as a general relief; more likely since it need only be adopted by those who consider time too precious a gift spent in a sort of trifling which seems to do good, nor to give satisfaction; all who prefer the present system, enjoy the gratification of spending whole mornings either in making or giving calls. The only difference to them be, that they could no longer with any

justice complain of the system as irksome or annoying.

In such observations I would be understood to refer to those calls of ceremony, habit, or fancied necessity, which are universally complained of behind the scenes. Visits of friendship are of a totally different order, and might be arranged for accordingly. But whatever plans may be proposed, the great evil to be avoided is, a universal determination to appear pleased with what is as universally complained of as a waste of time, and a tax upon patience and sincerity; for that can never be a right state of things, where a general grievance is borne with under the pretence of its being a pleasure. There are many grievances which must be borne with, and which it is consequently desirable to make the best of; and there are others which fall heavily upon individuals, and yet conduce to the general good; but that a burden felt by all, and sincerely deplored by the majority of those who bear it, should come not only to be submitted to, but apparently rejoiced in, is a phenomenon which exhibits so striking an instance of the self-mastery of woman, that one cannot sufficiently regret this exercise of her magnanimity not being devoted to a nobler cause.

The art of receiving guests agreeably, arranging them judiciously, and treating them so that every one shall feel perfectly at ease, is of more importance to the mistress of a house, than the display of her richest jewels, or her most studied accomplishments. Indeed, there is always this fact to be borne in mind with regard to society in general, that nothing which is merely an embellishment to ourselves, can, as regards its real value, bear the slightest proportion to that which affords gratification to others. The mistress of a house would do little for the enjoyment of her guests by being the most splendidly dressed, or even the most striking and distinguished person in her own drawing-room. The probability is that half of them would go away secretly, if not openly, affronted. Her proper duty is to allow them an opportunity of shining, if they can; and in pursuance of

this subject, she will endeavor to make way for the distinguished, as well as to bring forward the retiring. But more especially it is her part to be unobtrusively watchful of individual comfort, attentive to every wish, moving about from one to another without bustle or officiousness, and above all things taking care that the most insignificant are not neglected. She must do all this too with a perfect knowledge of what is in human nature, so as not to offend while endeavoring to please; and with a perfect adaptation of herself to the different characters of her guests, whose enjoyment for the evening must be in a great measure at her disposal. Thus the mistress of a house may attain the desirable object of having her visitors all pleased and satisfied, without any of them being aware how much of their gratification they owe to her; for I am supposing her one of those unselfish women, who, when they go into company, are intent only upon the happiness of those around them, and who consequently escape the disappointment of having failed in their own persons to be either courted or admired.

But there is a far different manner of visiting and receiving visits from this—and I had almost said, would that there were no other with which we had any thing to do! I mean where one or more friends—real friends, are invited by the mistress of a house to be for a short time the companions of her fireside enjoyments, and, as members of the same family, to partake in whatever may constitute its amusements or its privileges. Here then we find an appropriate and ample field for the full development of those qualifications, whether natural or acquired, which are combined in an agreeable companion; for here are happily united, freedom for the exercise of truth, time for narrative, opportunity for confidence, resource for intellect, occasion for pleasantries, recollections shared together, hopes mutually anticipated, and indeed any thing which an affectionate heart, and an enlightened understanding, can require for enjoyment.

What a luxury too it is for a married woman to feel such perfect identity with her

husband in all he is, and in all he possesses, that her home, her books, her garden, seem to be her very own to place at the disposal of her friend; but greater than all, is the luxury of gathering into her bosom that fullness of delight, derived from ten thousand sources, yet all embodied in the simple feeling, that she has a home to offer. There is nothing in the joy of girlhood equal to this; and say what people will about marriage being the grave of friendship, I cannot think the wife is the person most to blame where it is so. Perhaps there is no blame at all, for I should rather think the falling off of female friends might, in a great measure, be attributed to a natural shrinking, on the side of the unmarried party, from admitting, as she supposes he must be, a man, and perhaps a stranger, into her confidence. There are, however, so very few men who care any thing at all about such confidence, who feel any curiosity to know what female friendship is composed of, or who even listen when its details are laid before them, that such an objection need scarcely be allowed to interfere with the freedom of intercourse, which constitutes one of the great privileges of friendship, and without which it must be little better than a name.

Beyond this, too, there may be a little fault on the part of the unmarried friend, in attaching ideas of what is interesting, exclusively to those unfamiliar scenes, and images of impossible perfection, which occupy the mind of the romantic, or the highly imaginative, to the exclusion of what is real, practical, and true. Thus the wife who really does her duty, is not unfrequently condemned by her female friends, as being a commonplace, and perhaps a vulgar, or degenerate being. But could they really know what deep and thrilling interests are to her involved in this her duty, what high and burning zeal—what quenchless ardor—what enthusiasm, what feeling, are expended upon the avocations of each day, marked as they must be, by the ebb and flow of affection's ceaseless tide; could they see all this, how would they start astonished at their own mis-

take, in having supposed that the mere material elements upon which the duties of a wife were exercised, were in themselves what constituted the reality of all the interest which she had in life. No; beyond these visible signs which tell of the observance or neglect of duty, she has a life—a soul—a spiritual existence, which comprises every thing between the wide extremes of happiness and wo; and if her early associates will not believe it, if they will withdraw themselves, and think, and say, that she is changed, it is because she regards all the intense and profound realities of the life she now leads, as too sacred to be unveiled even before the eye of friendship.

But she is not changed: a warm, true-hearted woman cannot change to those she has loved in early life, simply because her name, her home, and the occupations which fill up her time, are not the same. Affection in such a heart can never die; where it has once fixed, it will retain its hold; and if by force it should be shaken off, it will be like wrenching away a portion of the heart itself. If new ties are formed, it does not follow that the old ones shall be broken. They rather grow into the soul from having been interwoven with its earliest affections, and if they are less observable in after life, it is only because they lie the deepest, and are consequently the most concealed.

But to return to the subject of duty; in the act of entertaining her familiar friends, and particularly those who are younger than herself, the married woman may possibly suppose that she enjoys only a pleasant recreation, by which the more serious business of life may be diversified with social amusement. But however much this might have been the case in her single state, it is so no longer; for as the mistress of a house, and the head of a family, she holds a relation to her young friends which is necessarily invested with a degree of authority, and for the use of this authority she is as a Christian woman accountable. Even if no attempt is made to use her influence, so as to give to the minds around her a bias either one way or another,

some bias will necessarily be given by the general character of her establishment, and the tone of feeling by which her domestic and social affairs are regulated. Besides which, her young friends will naturally look to her to see what plans she wishes to adopt, and what principles it is her object to carry out, and their conduct will be regulated accordingly; for whatever the degree of familiarity may be which exists between them, the rules which she has adopted for the government of her household, they will feel it an obligation strictly to observe.

The mistress of a house too, will have an influence beyond this, and one which is rarely enjoyed through any other medium of communication; for if she be one who has cultivated and embellished her own mind, storing up for the benefit of others all those means of being agreeable which no woman ought to neglect, she will be the delight of her young friends as a fireside companion, and as such will share in all their moments of unrestrained vivacity, and unlimited freedom.

The authority of teachers, and unfortunately sometimes that of parents too, extends only to those hours of discipline which are spent immediately under their care. Could any system of scholastic instruction be made to regulate without spoiling the sports of children, or could any means of influence be made to operate upon their play, what an amount of additional good might be effected in the formation of individual character! For how often is it found that the child who is taught, questioned, and examined by his masters, who answers freely and fluently on the points referred to, and who is ready and prompt as if his whole mind was there, is in reality but an actor performing his part in that august presence, from which, the moment he is dismissed, his real character bursts forth in the play-ground, to be developed in an entire being as opposite to that which stood before the desk, as if they held no relation to each other! How often too, do we find that persons who appear staid and demure on serious occasions, are most objectionable companions in their

mirth; while, on the other hand, those whose mirth is innocent and pure, and guiltless of all taint from selfish or malignant feeling, may safely be trusted when they are in earnest.

But the mistress of a family in the midst of her young friends enjoys the high privilege of giving a right tone to their enjoyments, and chastening the spirit of their mirth. That is, if she has so cultivated her own understanding as to know what belongs to nature, and to be able to adapt herself to it; for without this power, she must ever be a stranger to the inner and more potent workings of the human heart. But if she has studied those accomplishments which are particularly attractive to youth, and those more important qualifications of mind and intellect which give superiority as well as interest wherever they are found, she will be able to render the moments spent beneath her roof the most privileged perhaps of a whole lifetime—moments in which good impressions were rendered indelible as being accompanied by the most delightful associations—moments retained within the richest treasury of memory, to be made the pattern of the choicest intercourse, and the highest intellectual communion through other chains of association, extending onwards from family to family, and from heart to heart, into a never-ending future.

We see here the consequences which I have perhaps sufficiently dwelt upon, of having cultivated the art of being agreeable, not to shine in general society, as is too frequently the case; not to establish any personal claim to admiration, merely to render striking and brilliant the intellectual companionship of a single hour, but to make the fireside circle a centre of attraction to which the young may love to resort; to render home the chosen spot of earth, where all who are admitted within its social fellowship may delight to dwell, where hopes and joys may be shared together, and where all the thoughts most cherished and enjoyed, are such as tend towards a happier and holier state of existence.

Without having studied the cultivation of

the mind, or the embellishment of the character in general, how can the mistress of a family throw around the scenes of home-enjoyments this intellectual and spiritual charm? How can she keep away the cloud of dulness, the monotony of common-place, the shadow of discontent, of which young persons so often complain when visiting their married friends? and how, when her intercourse with them is marked by no lively or impressive character, can she expect that her influence over them will extend to what is lasting or good? It is impossible; because it is not in the nature of the human heart to be thus influenced, without being thus impressed.

To the married woman, then, it is a serious thing to have lost, by indolence or neglect, those golden opportunities of being useful to society, which her position naturally places within her reach. For it is not so much our private precepts which have weight, and perhaps still less our public ones, so much as the influence of individual character upon a surrounding circle, and through that circle upon the world at large.

The English wife should, therefore, regard her position as a central one, and remember that from her, as the head of a family, and the mistress of a household, branch off in every direction trains of thought, and tones of feeling, operating upon those more immediately around her, but by no means ceasing there; for each of her domestics, each of her relatives, and each of her familiar friends, will in their turn become the centre of another circle, from which will radiate good or evil influence, extending onwards, in the same manner, to the end of all things—to the disruption of all earthly ties, and the union of the great family of heaven, where sweet and harmonious notes of her own teaching may possibly be numbered with the songs of the blessed forever and forever.

Is it then a subject merely to be glanced over with a careless wish that we could be useful to our fellow-creatures!—that we could leave on the minds of those who will remember us when we are dead, some last-

ing impress worthy of their high destiny and ours? All may do this. Of that we are convinced. But are we equally or sufficiently convinced that some impress will, and must be left, whether we have desired it or not? And what if it should be such as to mark them out for wrath in the great day of wrath! And if that too should have spread, as the other might have done, on—from one circle and one generation to another—from one family, one community, one people, one country, widening on every hand until the world itself should suffer from the universal taint!

The carrying out of such a thought to its full extent is too tremendous, and yet we know of no natural limits by which influence either good or evil can be confined or arrested in its progress towards eternity. We can only ask with penitence and prayer that what we have hitherto exercised amiss may be overruled for good, and that what we have yet to exercise, may be directed by Him who alone can give the power to use it for his glory.

There are many cases of practical duty, in which it seems as if the language of Scripture had, by general consent, been explained away as referring to times and circumstances in which we have no part. In none is this more striking than as regards hospitality, few of us considering ourselves at all the more required from any thing we meet with there, when we prepare a feast, to call in the poor or the friendless to partake. Without pretending to be wiser than others, by applying these and similar injunctions more literally than they appear to be generally understood, it seems to me a question of deep importance to a serious mind, whether we are not many of us required to go much further than we do in extending our hospitality to those who, according to the usages of the world, may appear to have but little claim upon such attentions.

There is an extensive class of persons, who, if we would do to them as we would that others should do to us under similar circumstances, instead of being objects of gene-

ral neglect, would become objects of our especial kindness in this respect. I mean those who are separated from their own home-connections by becoming assistants in business, or otherwise attached to families in which they are comparatively strangers.

It cannot be denied that a system of hospitality thus carried out towards persons so circumstanced, or according to the Scripture rule of inviting those who cannot ask us in return, would require the exercise of considerable self-denial as well as benevolence; and more especially so with those whose homes are the centre and the source of the greatest happiness they enjoy; for it is perhaps the only disadvantage accompanying an excess of this home-feeling, that the more perfect is the satisfaction with which we gather into the domestic circle, the less willingness we feel that a stranger should "*intermeddle with its joys*."

Thus we sometimes find a sort of household exclusiveness, and a too great concentration of domestic satisfaction, prevailing almost to the extent of selfishness, where such feelings are indulged without the restraint of judgment or of principle. To persons infected with this home-mania, their own houses, their own grounds, their own habits, and their own modes of thinking and living are always the very best imaginable, and such as bear no comparison with those of any other family. So much is this the case, that they seem almost to be *a law unto themselves*; while above every thing they reject the idea of being improved by adopting the views and the practices of others. It is needless to say that such persons have little weight to throw into the scale of social influence either on the side of good or evil, for the absurdities they exhibit to the world effectually prevent their doing any considerable amount of harm beyond what is negative.

But there are degrees of this evil against which we may not all be sufficiently on our guard, because we may be mistaking it for good; yet when it stands in the way of our practising the duty of hospitality, we should ask ourselves seriously whether that home

which ought to be the scene of our greatest earthly happiness is not in reality the temple of our worship. A higher cultivation of the feelings of kindness and benevolence towards others, a deeper sympathy for their trials and sufferings, a more earnest solicitude for their welfare, and a greater desire to impart the blessings we enjoy, would, I am persuaded, tend very much to reconcile us to any temporary interruption of our domestic enjoyments which might be occasioned by the presence of a stranger, even should his habits and modes of thinking be the most dissimilar to our own. And if any thing could be done by this means to improve the minds and morals of that important class of society who will constitute the next generation of men of business—men who will give the weight of extensive influence either to the side of good, or evil, that strong feeling of household exclusiveness, which is but a refined and extended selfishness, ought certainly in some measure to give way.

We complain of the habits of young men, and with some cause, yet when we recollect of what materials human nature is composed, and compare these with the situation of young men generally; but more especially when we think of the thousand inviting avenues to sin which are opened to their choice, the cordiality with which they are met by evil associates, and invited to every rendezvous of vice; and when we compare this with the very little cordiality they meet with on the opposite side; the scanty welcomes, the cold notice, and the treatment equally distant and disrespectful, we surely must expect them to be more than human wholly to withstand the one, and to bind themselves over with lasting and warm attachment to the other.

Young men, too, are often diffident of their own attractions in polished society, and sometimes not without considerable reason, more especially when they find themselves treated in respectable company with every demonstration of contempt. Here, then, we must also remember that vice is not delicate in her distinctions. In her wide halls of revelry,

the ignorant, the mean, and the unlettered find a welcome. She slights them not for want of polished manners. She heeds neither personal inferiority, nor unfashionable attire. All—all are welcome, from the raw stripling, to the friendless stranger, who finds not in the wide world another or a safer home.

In contemplating this view of the subject, I have often thought, what an amount of good might be effected, if a little more attraction were held out by Christians in general, towards persons of this class. We ought seriously to question, too, whether we are really doing them justice—whether we are not resting too well satisfied in merely urging upon them the necessity of attention to public worship, when a few more welcomes into Christian families might possibly do more for their real good, than many sermons without participation in the real comforts of any respectable home.

Nor is it the mere invitation of such persons at stated times, which can effect the good so much required, the mere bestowment of a dinner, or the mere permission to come on Sundays and be present during the hours of family devotion. Good as this unquestionably is, there is something else required; and this something should be supplied by the mistress of the house; for, I repeat, that to woman all the common usages of kindness are so easy and familiar, as to leave her little excuse for neglecting the claims of hospitality, which constitute so essential a part of social duty. There is much kind feeling conveyed even by so slight an act as a cordial shake of the hand, but especially by those apparently slight observations upon personal affairs, which evince an interest in the situation and circumstances of a guest, and which often lead to a freedom of communication which, as a means of influence, may be turned to the happiest account.

In all associations in which the feelings and affections are concerned, it must never be forgotten, that the *manner* in which an act of benevolence is done, is often of far greater importance than the act itself.—That it is possible to be kind in an unkind manner; to

give a great deal away, and yet be most ungenerous. This truth we have many of us, at some time or other of our lives, had to feel perhaps too keenly for our peace. Yet it is possible the thought of what such kindness cost us, may prove a wholesome one in its effect upon our own conduct towards others, by teaching us how to soothe, where through ignorance we might have wounded; how to attract, where we might have repelled; and consequently how to do good, where we might inadvertently have done evil.

But it is useless to think of the manner, until we have seen the act itself to be a duty; and I would here appeal to the wives of England, as they value the good of their country, and the good of their sons and brothers—as they value youth in general, and regard it as the season for remembering our Creator, and the Giver of all our blessings—as they would cherish its buoyant hopes, strengthen its high capabilities, and lay an imperishable foundation of good, where evil must otherwise enter and occupy the vacant room—as they value all these considerations, I would urge them not to confine their social kindness merely to those who can requite them after their own manner; but to extend it to those who, though comparatively strangers, share in the affections and the feelings of a common nature, and who are now undergoing the formation of their characters for time and for eternity.

“Not following lower things,”—was a noble motto adopted by a noble queen,* when she chose as emblematical of the course she intended to pursue, a marigold turning to the sun. Although nothing could be more at variance with the duties of a wife, and especially one of that class of society to which this work more especially applies, than to be aspiring after any selfish or personal aggrandizement as regards mere sublunary things; there is an ambition, if I may call it such, which ought to fill the heart, and rouse the energies of every Christian woman who stands at the head of a household, whatever

her position may be with regard to outward circumstances. I refer to that aspiration after higher and holier things, which lifts the soul out of its grovelling anxieties and worldly cares, and directs its hopes unchangeably towards the world which is eternal.

It is not consistent with the aim of the writer in such a work as this, to enter fully upon the subject of that change of heart which alone can qualify for forming any just or proper estimate of what belongs to a preparation for the heavenly state. Had such been my intention, I would not have left the consideration of so momentous and sublime a theme, to the last few pages of this work. But leaving this subject, in its vastness and its depth—its absorbing interests, and its solemn truths, to writers of a higher and a weightier character, I would still indulge a hope that what has here been said may in some degree assist towards a more full and satisfactory exemplification of the Christian character. For even where religion is felt and owned to be the one thing needful, and where it is adopted as the principle and the rule of life, those familiar avocations which occupy the attention of every day are not always conducted in the spirit which ought to regulate the Christian's life. Some good persons err on these points from ignorance; some from want of thought, and many from not regarding them as essential to religion; and thus the standard of excellence is lowered, and we come to be “satisfied with inferior things.”

It would as ill become me, as it would be contrary to my feelings, to speak in an unkind or censorious spirit of those, who with good intentions, and while making great endeavors, fall short in little things; but I am convinced that along with this deficiency, there is, to a certain extent, a tendency to aim at what is low, sufficient of itself to prevent the attainment of what is great. The more circumscribed our influence, the less this tendency is seen and felt; but when we take the direction of a household, and consequently have much to do with the formation of the characters around us, this tenden-

* Marguarite of Valois, sister of Francis I., and Queen of Navarre.

ey to grovel tells to an amazing and incalculable extent.

It is far from my wish to write on this subject as one who has neither knowledge nor feeling of what wives in general have to struggle with, in the way of depressing or degrading circumstances. I know that the occupations of a household, by reminding us perpetually of what is material, have a strong tendency to occupy the mind with that alone. I know that under wasted health, or weariness, or disappointment, to be urged to struggle after what is high, sounds like a mockery to the human heart. And I know too that there are trials in the lot of woman, almost sufficient of themselves to quench the very life within her soul, and to extinguish there the power to hope for any thing before the grave. I know that the spirit may be harassed—wounded—broken; but I am yet to learn, that under any circumstances we are justified in giving all things up.

I should rather reason thus—that having striven after excellence in every department, we have so multiplied our resources, that something always must be left; so that if nothing in the shape of positive happiness could ever reach us more, we should still be capable of adding to the happiness of others.

But the most powerful and widely prevailing cause of that moral and intellectual degradation—that downward tendency of the mind, and that grovelling of the spirit among material things, which is so much to be lamented over in the wives of the present day, arises clearly and unquestionably out of the false estimate so universally formed of what is most to be desired—nay, of what is absolutely essential to existence. It is this vain and fruitless ambition with regard to worldly things, in which we are all more or less engaged, that wears down our energies, and wearies out our hopes. It is the disappointment, the perplexity, the harass of this long struggle, which leaves us so spiritless and worn. It is the emptiness of our success when the highest worldly wish has been attained, which makes us, in the midst of

all our coveted possessions, so miserably poor.

It is difficult to speak strongly on these subjects, yet with that kindness and respect which I feel that my countrywomen deserve, and deserve especially from me. But when I assert again that it is not intention which is in fault, so much as a certain set of mistaken views which more or less affect us all, I would fondly hope I might obtain their forgiveness for being more than commonly earnest in so important a cause. In this hope I appeal to their own hearts, whether the daily conflict they are many of them enduring is not in reality after that which “perisheth in the using;” whether it ever brings them a reward at all commensurate with what it costs; and whether it is not in itself a weariness to the very soul. I appeal to society at large, whether the importance we many of us attach to appearing well before the world, in other words, to dressing and living in a certain style, has not irritated more tempers, destroyed more peace, occasioned more disputes, broken more spirits, crossed more love, hindered more improvement, and caused more spiritual declension, than any other single cause which could be named. And what has it done to throw into the opposite scale? Encouraged one kind of manufactory to the disadvantage of another, changed our fashions, excited our vanity, furnished our houses, decked our persons—and what then? Sent us forth into society envied and envying one another, and disseminating wherever we might go, low thoughts, disparaging allusions, and uncharitable feelings, all arising out of the very rivalry and competition of which this fruitless ambition was the source.

Let us look at one channel only among the many thousands through which it operates to the destruction of human happiness, and the disunion of natural ties. It is no poet's fable, and I speak it reverently, believing what I speak, when I say, that the love which grows up between two young people who expect to spend their lives together, is of every earthly feeling that which most endears to us all which is most excellent in itself, most beauti-

ful in the creation, and most beneficent in the dispensations of an all-wise and eternal God. Who then would quench this feeling, or lower its exercise, or make it a mere slave to wait upon the customs of the world? The voice of humanity exclaims against so base, so foolish a perversion of our nature. Youth exclaims against it, as well it may. Society—the world exclaims. The world? No, that can never be. It is the world whose unrelenting voice demands this sacrifice—the world before whose artificial glare the star of love must hide its purer ray.

It is because the world is the great altar upon which the hearts of multitudes are laid, that the shrine of domestic happiness so often is profaned by broken vows—vows broken in the spirit, and therefore the mere symbols of a love, without its sweetness or its life. It is because the spirit of the world demands that we should love and serve the mammon of unrighteousness, that hearts are bought and sold, and youth is wedded to old age, and every mockery of feeling which imagination can conceive, is perpetrated under the grave name of prudence. I have myself advocated prudence, and I have urged the necessity of waiting for what are popularly considered as sufficient means. Yet this has been chiefly in conformity with the universal system we acknowledge, of “regarding lower things.” I did not, and I never shall, believe the system is a right one in itself; but until our views are more enlightened, and our principles are strong enough to support us in the effort, it would be worse than folly to advise that individuals here and there should overstep the bounds of prudence as they are now laid down, not knowing what they did.

The new order of things which I would advocate must be a general one, brought about by simultaneous views, and feelings, and determinations. There will then be no world to fear, for we shall constitute ourselves a world, in which lower things will no longer be regarded, except as such—a world in which the warmest feelings of the heart will no longer be considered as bearing any com-

parison, in value, with the cold formalities of artificial life—a world in which what we wear, and what we use, shall no longer be esteemed as more important than what we do—a world in which people shall be judged of by what they are, and not by what they possess—a world in which what is costly and brilliant in ornament, shall give place to that which is excellent in character, and sterling in value.

And when shall this bright epoch arrive?—this dawning of better hopes—this day of promise for our country, and our homes? It will arrive when the wives of England shall hold themselves above their circumstances; and, estimating that most highly which is really high, shall understand how principle is the basis of all good; and having subjected these principles to the word of God, and tried them by the only test which is safe and true, they may then adorn the superstructure by all which the purest taste and the most chastened feeling can suggest.

In adopting the motto of one of the most amiable and accomplished of female sovereigns, we must not forget that hers was the pursuit of excellence of almost every kind; in her studies, her attainments, and in all those graces of mind and person which adorn a court. Nor do I see why the raising of our highest admiration to that which is highest in itself, should in any respect interfere with our desire after excellence in general.

It is a melancholy thought, when marriage has united the destiny of two human beings for this life at least, that one of them should grow indifferent to those qualities of mind and person which formed the chief attraction to the other. It is a melancholy thought, that when a wife has taken upon herself the duties which belong to the mistress of a family, she should be willing to lose those charms which constitute the loveliness of woman. It is a melancholy thought, that because she has become a useful, she must cease to be an intellectual, being. But it cannot—it must not be. The very thought is one of treason against the love and the happiness of married life; for what is there among all the em-

bellishments of female character, which this love cannot legitimately appropriate, and this happiness enhance and improve?

In no other situation in life can woman find so appropriate a sphere for the exercise of every grace, and the display of every charm, as in the centre of her home-enjoyments; yet here, how often do we find that she permits all the poetry of her mind to be extinguished, and after that the beautiful too often fades away. Life may remain the same to her in all its tangible realities; but as the sunshine passes from the landscape, so the light which gives freshness and vividness to every object, is gone forever.

It is said she has actual and pressing cares, which absorb her attention, to the exclusion of other, and especially of higher, thoughts. But here again is her mistake. It is not in woman's nature to be degraded or brought down by care, provided only the objects of her solicitude are worthy in themselves, or such as call forth feelings worthy of being indulged. The care—the love—the brooding tenderness of a fond mother or a faithful wife—when, I would ask, was woman found the worse for these? No. It is the element in which she lives, to care for those she loves. It is in this element that all her virtues rise and shine; while her whole character assumes a higher and more spiritual excellence. We talk of altered circumstances, and personal privations, but we libel the true heart of woman when we think it cannot stand the shock of such extremes as these. No, these are not the foes she fears; and it is an insult to her understanding, when society persuades her that she does fear them. Within her heart of hearts she has a nobler conviction, that her husband's happiness, and her own integrity and truth, are more to her than all the riches in the world. Why then, with these convictions, and with that strong capability which constitutes her dower, of rising above the tide of circumstance, and living apart from worldly things in the higher world of her affections—why will woman stoop to be the slave of habit, of custom, and most of all, of fashion, until her vanity and self-indul-

gence become the bane of man's existence, and her own?

And is it well that men, whose daily avocations necessarily call into service, as one of their great principles of action, a worldly and a selfish spirit—is it right that they should be urged, nay, goaded on, in the perpetual race of personal and family aggrandizement, by those who profess to love them, and who, consequently, ought to seek their ultimate and real good? May we not rather leave to them the whole adjustment of these worldly matters? It is their business, and their duty, to find a place among their fellow-men, to establish a footing in society, and to maintain it by all just and honorable means. This is no care of woman's. Her appropriate part is to adorn that station wherever it may be, by a contented mind, an enlightened intellect, a chastened spirit, and an exemplary life.

I have dwelt much upon the influence of woman in social and domestic life, and in her married state she will find that influence extending almost on every hand. What, then, will be her situation, without the aid of personal religion, to give a right direction to its operations upon other minds? But what will be her situation altogether without this aid?

The thought is too appalling.

"A boat sent out to sail alone

At midnight on the moonless sea,"

might bear some comparison to the situation of a solitary being trusting herself upon the world's great ocean without this guide; but a richly-freighted vessel, crowded with human beings, and bearing in its bosom the interests of as many souls, yet venturing out to sea without a pilot, without a compass, without any hope or means of safety, might with more justice be compared to the woman who should dare to engage in the deep responsibilities of married life, without religion to direct her course. Whatever difficulties may be thus encountered, she cannot meet them alone. Whatever dangers, others are drawn in to share them with her. Whatever storms, she braves them only at the peril of the precious lives committed to her trust. Whatever

rock she strikes upon, it wrecks not her alone, but all—all the rich treasury of hopes and interests which she bore along with her in that presumptuous course, and for all these she is accountable. I repeat, the thought is too appalling. Let us turn to scenes of more familiar occurrence, where there is more satisfaction, because there is more hope.

There is a large class of persons, who without having given up their hearts entirely to the influence of personal religion, are wishing that they could do so, and intending some time or other that they will. On all solemn occasions they feel as if they actually would; and never more so perhaps than when they enter upon the duties of married life. To woman this is so great and important a change, that it naturally produces, if any thing can, trains of reflection highly favorable to an altered and improved state of mind altogether; and if she has ever seriously thought of religion, she does so then. Those who rest satisfied with good intentions, and especially in religious matters, are glad of any alteration in their circumstances which they think will make it easier to begin; and they hail the opening of a new life, as the entrance upon one which will be more exemplary than the past. Thus it is often with perfect sincerity, that the young religious professor believes she will set out upon a new career when engaging in the duties of a wife. Her feelings are much softened, too, by separation from her former friends; she fears the difficulties of her untried path; and thus is altogether more disposed than ever in her life before to do, and to be, what she sees clearly to be right. If, under these circumstances, she has married a good man, her first temptation will be to think, for that reason, that she must be good herself; if a man who has little or no religion, her first trial will be to find that instead of being helped, as she had expected, so smoothly on her way, she has, in addition to her own difficulties, to help him and all his household.

But a more familiar temptation, and a more frequent trial than either of these, is one which steals by its insidious nature into the

very heart of domestic life; and it works the more deceitfully by mixing itself up with all that is most reputable and most approved in society in general, and not less than others, in the society of the good.

Persons of this description, in all probability, seek the acquaintance of the well-meaning young wife, or she seeks theirs; and being a sincere and somewhat hopeful character, not having much foundation of her own, but easily led on by others, she is induced by their companionship to take a higher standing in religious matters than she ever did before. Encouraged by their kindness, she advances step by step, progressing outwardly, and gaining confidence as she goes on. All this perhaps might be well, for she is still sincere so far as her self-knowledge extends; but here again the spirit of the world creeps in. Indeed the question is, whether she has not all the while been actuated by the spirit of the world, for it is now so reputable to be religious, that temptation can assume this form as well as any other.

With this advance in an outward, and, perhaps, too visible profession, the cares of the young wife increase. The circle of her acquaintance widens. Visits and morning-calls are not to be neglected; and well if they are not devoted to that most objectionable of all kinds of gossip, which chooses the minister and the observances of a religious life, for its theme. But in addition to this, the young wife listens to the popular and common talk about low worldly things. She learns to think much of her furniture, much of her dress, and much of the manner in which she entertains her friends. Nay, she is even glad to see that all this competition does not appear to be discarded from the fashionable world. As time passes on, she becomes more and more absorbed by the growing cares and thickening perplexities of every day; until at last it might become a matter of doubt to those around her, which in reality occupied her thoughts the most, the preparation for a party, or the preparation for eternity.

Need we wonder that such a woman has little religious influence? That she fails to

adorn the doctrine of our Saviour, or to commend the faith which she professes? Need we wonder that her husband, her servants, society at large, are not made better by her conversation and her example? Yet strange to say, it is sometimes wondered at that the religious conversation of such persons does not do good, and they themselves, when they have leisure for it, will labor diligently for the conversion of the poor. But they forget that those around them, and especially the poor, are quick-sighted to their inconsistencies, and that they know by other evidence than words, when the world is really in the heart.

By this slight picture, far be it from me to convey an idea that I could represent the really changed in heart; for I know that theirs is a foundation which none of these things move. I speak of those who have been only *almost* persuaded, and who, on the solemn occasion of their marriage, have set out in life with serious views and good intentions; yet whatever may be the clearness of these views, or the strength of these intentions, I believe that a great number of hopeful beginnings have been frustrated by this single root of evil, this spirit of the world. I believe also, that more spiritual declension among women

may be traced to the same cause, than to all the vice and all the infidelity to be met with among the openly profane.

It is then against this single enemy, above all others, that married women have to sustain each other in waging constant and determined war. I repeat, it is hard, too hard, for any single individual to struggle against the tide of popular feeling, more especially when religion numbers in her ranks so many who divide her claims with those of the world. But if the happiness of home be precious, we have that at stake. If our intellectual and moral good be worth preserving, we have that to cherish. If our religious influence be the most important treasure committed to our trust, we have that to hold secure. All to which the best feelings of the heart attach themselves as lovely and enduring is ours, if we maintain this conflict as we ought; and sink under it we never need, for we know to whom to go for help.

Let us then remember that a worldly spirit is the very opposite of that which finds its home in Heaven; and if our interests are sufficiently engaged in what is spiritual and eternal, we shall not easily be turned away to fix them upon "lower things."

THE

MOTHERS OF ENGLAND:

THEIR

INFLUENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY.

BY MRS. ELLIS,
AUTHOR OF "THE WOMEN OF ENGLAND," "SONS OF THE SOIL," "HINTS TO MAKE HOME
HAPPY," AND "THE WIVES OF ENGLAND."

UNIFORM EDITION,
COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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P R E F A C E.

IN offering to the public the last of a series of works on the subject of female duty, I feel that to confess their deficiencies, would not be to supply them ; and, therefore, I would prefer soliciting the attention of the reader to this fact—that they have not been written under the idea of presenting an entire summary of the life and character of woman, in the situations of daughter, wife, and mother, nor consequently under that of offering a substitute for any of those standard and excellent works on the same subject which adorn our libraries, but rather with the hope of throwing out a few hints and observations relative to the present state of English society, the tendency of modern education, and the peculiar social and domestic requirements of the country and the times in which we live.

Thus I have purposely avoided entering upon many important points of duty, and particularly those of a strictly religious nature, because I knew that the reader could find them more clearly and more ably treated elsewhere ; and because I felt it to be more within the compass of my own qualifications, to endeavor to assist and encourage the inexperienced, but well meaning, than to instruct the ignorant, or to convert the irreligious.

Looking seriously at those faults which are generally allowed, and at those follies which are sometimes by society, I have been compelled occasionally to speak in

strong language of certain peculiarities in the present aspect of social and domestic life, and especially of some of the habits and prejudices of my own sex. Had such peculiarities been less popular, or less generally indulged ; had they, in short, been regarded as objectionable, rather than otherwise, there would have been no need for me to have made any of them the subject of a book ; but the very fact of the opinion of society, and of many excellent persons, being in favor of that which is really opposed to the true interests of mankind, render it the more necessary for those who think differently, to speak what they believe to be the truth, and speak it without palliation or reserve.

If, in the performance of this somewhat stern duty, I may at times have appeared unjust or unsisterly to the class of readers whose attention I have been anxious to engage, they will surely have been able to perceive that it was from no want of sympathy with the weakness, the trials, and the temptations to which woman is peculiarly liable, but rather, since we can least bear a fault in that which we most admire, from an extreme solicitude that woman should fill, with advantage to others and enjoyment to herself, that high place in the creation for which I believe her character to have been designed.

It was originally my intention to have added to the present work, a chapter of

hints for step-mothers, and another on the consolations of old maids, which I am far from believing to be few ; but the subject more immediately under consideration grew, from its importance, to the usual extent of a book, almost before I was aware of it ; and it grew also upon my own mind, as the duties and responsibili-

ties of a mother were gradually unfolded, to an aspect of such solemn, profound, and unanswerable interest, that I feel the more forcibly how inadequate are my feeble representations to do justice to the claims of society upon the self-devoted, conscientious, and persevering exertions of the Mothers of England.

THE MOTHERS OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

A MOTHER'S FIRST THOUGHTS.

To attempt a description of the *feelings* of a mother on that important event which ushers into the world an immortal being, destined to be her peculiar charge, in its preparation both for this world and the next, would be to lift the natural veil, beyond which are shrouded those inner workings of the elements of happiness and misery, with which it may be truly said, that a stranger intermeddleth not. Still there are—there must be *thoughts* common to all mothers who reflect seriously; and it is with these chiefly, that the writer on maternal influence has to do.

It is no disparagement to that strongest of all principles in the female sex—a mother's love—to call it a mere instinct; for such it must be, when shared in common with the animal creation. Yet surely an instinct of such power as this, cannot be acted upon by a rational and responsible being, without anxious inquiry as to the direct nature of that responsibility; and why, in the ordinations of Divine Providence, an instinct so powerful should have been implanted in the mother's breast.

A mother's love, then, could never have been intended merely to be trifled with in the nursery, or expended in infantine indulgence. That which is strong enough to overcome the universal impulse of self-preservation—that which brings the timid bird to stoop her wing to the destroyer, in order to lure him from her nestlings—that which softens into tenderness the nature of the eagle, and the lion—that which has power to render the feeblest and most delicate of women, unflinching, heroic,

and bold—can never have been given by the Author of our existence, for any mean or trifling purpose. In the animal creation we see that this wonder-working principle answers the end of its creation, simply by instructing the mother how to prepare for her offspring, and by enabling her to protect and provide for them during the limited period of their helplessness, and incapacity for providing for themselves.

Thus far the human mother proceeds in the same manner; but as there is an existence beyond this, for which she has to prepare, so the love of the human mother, by its continuance to the end of life, is beautifully adapted to those higher responsibilities which devolve upon her as the parent of an immortal being, whose lot, it is her privilege to hope, will be cast among the happy, the holy, and the pure, for ever.

There is then a deep moral connected with the joyful tidings, that a child is born into the world. And “joyful” let us call these tidings, notwithstanding all which a morbid and miserable philosophy would teach, about another human creature being sent into this world, to sin and suffer like the rest. Yes, “joyful” let us call it; for the beneficent Creator himself has designed that there should be joy, and nature attests that there is joy, connected with this event; while the fond heart of the mother acknowledges in the smiles of her infant, an “overpayment of delight” for all her solitudes, her anxieties, and her fears.

And why should the mother not rejoice? Has she not become the possessor of a new nature, to whose support she can devote all the vast resources of her self-love, without

its selfishness? She has now an object peculiarly her own, for which to think and to feel; and, not less—for which to suffer. It is with joy then that a new being is ushered into the world, to share its portion among the many, in the mingled lot of human weal and wo; to enter upon a career in which it is but reasonable to indulge the hope of filling an honored place on the great theatre of life, of contributing its share to the sum of human happiness, and of enjoying in its turn the full exercise of all those faculties of mind and body, with which so much happiness is connected.

Why should the mother not rejoice? Have we so learned the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour, that we cannot trust to him the keeping of our earthly treasure? Surely there is infidelity of the most ungrateful kind, in that spirit which believes, and yet knows not how to trust. But there is both hope and trust in the mother's heart at that glad moment when she folds her infant to her bosom; for though she may herself have failed in judgment and in will ten thousand times, and fallen short in acts of duty almost beyond the hope of pardon, she looks into the guileless countenance of her child, and while the tears of true repentance fall upon its brow, she dedicates its young life, with all its growing energies, to a holier and more faithful service than she, with her weakness and waywardness, has been able to pursue.

Granting then that there is joy in the event of a child being ushered into life, and that such joy is founded chiefly upon a kind of indefinite hope, which fills the mother's breast; granting, also, as one of our first poets has beautifully said, that

—"The food of Hope
Is meditated action,"

the most natural inquiry—nay, that which must necessarily follow in the mind of a rational woman, is—For what shall I prepare my child?

Pending the solution of this most important question, it is more than probable that the mother's thoughts will go back to her

own childhood. By the many retrospective glances she has at different times thrown back upon the course of her own life, she will no doubt have been able to perceive many defects in the management and training by which she was herself conducted from infancy to youth, and now, if ever, she looks seriously upon this picture, with a fervent desire to ascertain the truth; to make out, as in a faithful chart, the rocks and shoals upon which her own bark may at different times have nearly suffered shipwreck; as well as the safer channels through which she has at other times been enabled to pass unharmed.

There are quiet hours permitted almost to all, before a mother enters again upon the active duties of life, during which this peculiar kind of retrospection might be, and no doubt often is, carried on with lasting benefit to herself and her family. Yet, on the other hand, it is deeply to be regretted, that the frivolous or low conversation of an ignorant nurse, should so often be permitted to rob these golden hours of their real value, by the introduction of idle jests and vulgar gossip, gathered up from other families and households, where the nurse has been in some measure a confidential, though temporary servant; and where she must necessarily have formed but a very imperfect idea of the general state of things within the domestic circle. How many a private history, whether true or false, has been thus detailed—how many a character has been robbed of its good name—how many an injurious suspicion has been excited which time could never afterwards obliterate, those women best can tell, who have found the first weeks of a mother's life hang heavily upon their hands, because shut out from their accustomed occupations and amusements; and who have consequently resorted to this means, in the hope of obtaining relief from the burden of their own dull thoughts.

I have no voluntary condemnation to pass upon the class of necessary assistants to which these expressions refer. So far from it, I have often thought that their unremitting exertions, their cheerful devotedness to the

comfort of a family in which they can feel no particular interest; and, above all, their care and solicitude for the preservation of a young life which can never be any thing to them,—entitle these nurses, especially, to gratitude and respect. That they are not a more enlightened class of women, is certainly no fault of theirs; and if they do sometimes make family histories fill up the long hours of their attendance in a sick-room, the blame of their doing so attaches far more to those who listen, than to those who tell.

But what is the young mother to do under these circumstances, who has never cultivated the habit of serious thought, and still less that of self-examination? By such there is but one thing to be done—to begin to cultivate these habits now. Hitherto she may have believed that she was acting only for herself, and therefore she may have been willing, to a certain extent, to reap the consequences of her own actions; but now the consequences are strictly to another, and that other a being almost dearer than herself. Upon her parents, her relations, nay, even upon her husband, she may have secretly thrown the blame of many of her own faults and deficiencies; but there can be no blame thrown upon another here. The field is open before her, in which she has to act—the page is clear and vacant upon which she has to write. Whatever is written there in the capacity of a mother, is written on her own responsibility—whatever is done, is done for time, and for eternity.

There are cases occurring to all of us, perhaps, oftener than the day, in which we do not take the trouble to decide whether we are right or wrong, simply because we deem the occasion of too little consequence to merit any serious thought; or, at all events, even while we feel that we are a *little* wrong, we satisfy the claims of conscience by the plea that it is our custom—our habit—or a thing we must do, because we have always done it. But in the training of a child, this plea can never be allowed, if indeed it had been available before, because every thing is of consequence then; and the sins of omission in that most trying process, tell as legibly upon the character

under formation, as those which are more positive and direct.

From the duties of a mother there is then no escape; and hence it follows, that if ever, in the whole course of woman's life, she is called upon to think seriously, it is when she first becomes a parent. I cannot but suppose, however, that English mothers will most of them have learned to think seriously long before this period, except indeed, in those lamentable cases, where the husband has chosen a companion for life, simply from the fancy of a moment—where the rose of a blooming cheek, the grace of a lovely form, or the sparkling pleasantry of an undisciplined spirit, have been presumed upon as guarantees for the happiness of a whole life.

Were I writing a book for the benefit of men instead of women, I might here enlarge upon the domestic calamities to which many have subjected themselves in consequence of making this kind of choice. I must confess that to me the spectacle of a silly mother surrounded by a family of children whom she has neither the skill to influence, nor the dignity to control, has always presented one of the most melancholy aspects of human life. But in whatever point of view this picture should be presented, it is more than probable that men would still go on to please themselves for the time being, regardless of ultimate vexation; and what is worse, it is equally probable, that they would still continue to charge the miseries of their own disappointment upon the whole female sex. Nor indeed would it be altogether politic, should we succeed in dissuading them from this generous system of protecting the helpless and incapable; because a heavy burden would then be left upon society, of which it is now in a great measure relieved, by the preference of the stronger sex falling so charitably and so often upon the weakest of the weak. It is only on behalf of the rising generation that this preference is to be regretted; and the more so, that a strong stimulus is now withheld, which ought to be thrown on the side of mental and moral cultivation; for it is of no use attempting to draw a veil over the truth, that so long

as women see their ignorance and folly not unacceptable to men, they will never strenuously endeavor to be wiser than they are.

Those luckless women who find themselves placed at the head of a family which they are expected to govern, without ever having learned, or even thought of, any mode of governing themselves, must be left almost entirely out of consideration in pursuing the course of reflection which is intended to occupy these pages. It is not certainly from choice that such pitiable creatures are placed beyond the pale of sympathy, for of all human beings, the mother who is expected to conduct a family without this preparation, has the most need of help from others. But the question naturally arises, when we think of such women—"How is it possible to help them?" The wayward whose will is at fault, and the simply uninformed whose judgment has never been rightly directed, may both be assisted, when we labor to convince them of their errors; but the naturally weak—the incapable—what is to be done with them? Nothing, that I am aware of, but to commend them to the tender mercies of those protectors, who, having placed them in situations for which they were not fitted, are doubly bound not to leave them to bear unaided the consequences of an imprudence not wholly their own.

It is one feature in the case under consideration, and by no means a hopeful one, that notwithstanding all the evils arising out of the unfitness of silly women to undertake the duties of wives and mothers, there still prevails among men a popular outcry against women of an opposite character, as if to possess talent, was necessarily to be guilty of pretension; or, as if to be imbecile, was necessarily to be amiable. Happily for men, and women too, but more happily for infancy than either, there is a wide range of intellect between the two extremes of wisdom and of folly; and it is to this class—to women of competent minds, desirous of turning their abilities to the best account, that I would venture chiefly to address myself; for if, on the one hand, the absolutely weak would be incapable of profiting by such hints as I may

be able to suggest, those who are already wise, and consequently fitter than myself to discuss the important topics now under consideration, will, I hope, be willing to pardon me for transcribing, for the sake of others, what they already know.

To persons of ordinary intellect then, to persons of fair and candid minds, but chiefly to such as feel their own deficiencies, and would be glad to profit by the experience and observation of others, I would, in the true spirit of charity, submit these pages, because it is to such I believe that the first experience of a mother's life will have many anxious feelings intermingled with its joys.

It is among this class especially, that I have imagined the first thoughts of a mother to wander back to her own childhood, and to take a serious and impartial survey of her own past life; to mark where she has fallen short, or gone astray, by what temptations she has been most frequently overcome, and which have been the weakest points in her own character. But above all, I have imagined that the Christian mother would by prayer, and heartfelt dedication, commend her child to the care and guidance of its Heavenly Father, in the hope that both it and its earthly parents might begin a new life more strictly devoted to his service and his glory.

It is scarcely possible to imagine a really impartial and heart-searching review of the past to be entered into, by one whose mind has ever been seriously impressed with the nature and importance of religious truth, without a desire arising to make the kind of dedication here alluded to; but it is one of the constant besetments even of the rightly intentioned, and often of the truly convinced, to put off this great work until some vaguely anticipated era in our existence shall have marked the season of dedication with peculiar solemnity, or stamped the resolution with additional force. How often this era proves in the end to be the hour of irremediable sickness, it is not my business here to inquire; but certainly if the possibility of near and awful death, if the preparation for an

event which in many cases has proved but a short passage to the grave—if a providential and merciful escape from the dangers of that trying hour—and if the important reality of entering at once as it were upon a new and twofold existence—if all these circumstances combined be insufficient to constitute an era so important as that which is required for the date of a solemn dedication of the heart and the life to God, it is scarcely likely that human experience will ever afford the opportunity desired, and the inquiry necessarily follows in such a case, whether it is really desired at all.

It is by no means an unfrequent case, that as young people grow up, and find themselves either not quite so clever, or not quite so good as they expected and wished to be, they reflect either secretly or openly upon the management of their parents, who they believe might have made them better than they are. It is quite possible too that their parents may have been in fault; and that either from their own discrimination, or from the general advance of society towards a more enlightened state, they do actually see the defects of their own training, as those defects begin to tell upon their characters and conduct in riper years. All who have been led to think seriously on this subject, have probably felt this; but it is not all who have an opportunity of showing how such defects may be remedied by training up others in a happier and wiser manner.

Again, we are all more or less beguiled into the belief that with us it is too late to make any serious alteration in the habits which mark our private lives. Indeed, the fact that they are habits, seems to stamp them with a kind of excusability, if I may be allowed the expression; though we lament over them in tones of contrition before our friends, and even believe in our own sincerity when we pray to have them forgiven. But if we can thus excuse ourselves a few secretly cherished faults, and if we are sometimes content to pursue our earthly pilgrimage under the pressure of the burden of which we still complain, surely the mother,

in contemplating the future character of her child, will not allow herself to suppose that the same plea will be available here. No; neither ignorance nor habit, those two strongholds of the human soul under which it so often takes refuge, fondly believing that they will cover a multitude of sins; neither the one, nor the other, will serve the mother's purpose now. What she has condemned in the management of her parents, she is bound the more scrupulously to avoid in her own—what she has grown too old to correct in herself, she has no excuse for not preventing in her child.

Beyond this, there is mixed up with many of the duties of advanced experience, a spirit of heaviness, a sense of depression owing to the many failures of youth's golden hopes—a fainting of the soul under the manifold conflicts it has had to wage, which, though by no means beyond the reach of religious consolation to soothe and to alleviate, has a deadening effect upon the exercise of energy, both in worldly and in spiritual things.—Happily for the young life over which the mother watches, it knows no shadow from such clouds as these. Youth enters freshly and gaily upon its untried career, and not all the failures of the thousands, and tens of thousands who have already erred and strayed from the right path, have power to damp the ardor and the hope with which it eagerly pursues each object of desire. And how beautiful and encouraging to the time-worn parent is this fresh spring of existence when her own has lost its elasticity and power! To her it may sometimes appear that scarcely any thing in the world is worth the effort necessary to obtain it. But to her child how different! Supply but a sufficient motive, and the energy is there; point out a course of action, and the impulse is alive and present; direct to the attainment of an object, and the question never arises, as it does in after life, whether *it is worth while*.—Why then should the mother not rejoice, when she has this new energy, this strong impulse, and this unquestioning ardor to work with, in preparing for the vicissitudes

as well as the enjoyments of after life?—Why should the mother not rejoice, when all that has been exhausted in her own feeble frame, all that has been extinguished in her own waning mind, arises fresh and vigorous beneath her hand, and shoots forth into a new and hopeful existence, so bound up with her own, that while she gives direction to each faculty, she may also derive encouragement and gladness from its healthy and successful exercise?

There are then many causes, both in reason and in nature, why the mother should rejoice; and perhaps it is this very rebounding of the heart back to all, and more than all it has ever enjoyed in life and love, that constitutes in some measure the temptation to which an affectionate nature yields, so as to rest satisfied with the mere bodily health of a fondly-treasured infant, with the amusements of the nursery, and with the first caresses of childhood, instead of looking beyond the present hour, or regarding it as a season of preparation for a future day. Thus time is trifled on. To avoid contradiction, and consequent distress, becomes the mother's only thought. The occupation of the hand seems to demand her whole attention, as another and another little body springs up to require her care; and the mind, the temper—in fact, the whole moral being is thus set aside as a thing to be taken up again at some future time, when the child shall be sent to school, or committed to the care of a governess, to be made wise and good.

Now, it is quite evident to a mother of the meanest capacity, that if the food of her infant was to be withheld or rendered unwholesome for a single day, the body of the child would suffer; and it is a fact which cannot be too forcibly impressed upon all mothers, that the mind, even in its infant state, is deriving nourishment, either of a healthy or an unhealthy nature, from every thing around it. Let the different effect upon the spirits of a child between a dull and a cheerful nurse be duly considered, and this fact will appear more plain. I am not absurd enough to suppose that the mind of an infant

must be treated like that of a mature and rational being. All I would maintain is, that there are little dawnings of intelligence at a very early age, indications of temper, and symptoms of peculiar temperament, which ought to be watched, and either cherished or restrained, with as much assiduity as is generally bestowed upon the animal frame.

It is common, too, with mothers of the humblest capacity, as well as with the more enlightened, to observe with the most scrutinizing attention the bodily health of their children, believing that even where no disease exists, there may still be tendencies in the constitution, and liabilities to certain ailments, which maternal love is ever quick to detect in their first appearance, and which the mother seldom spares either time or pains to arrest in their progress.

In a manner not the less certain, because it is less palpable, does the human mind bring along with it seeds of disease, individual tendencies, and peculiarities of nature, certainly not less important than those which belong more especially to the bodily frame. All these ought to be the care of the mother, to search for, to detect, and to turn into a healthy course; for as in her care of the animal frame, it is for the future that she watches, toils, and labors, in order that her offspring may be healthy, active, and fit for all the useful purposes of life; so it is for the future, and for one which extends far beyond what the body needs to be prepared for, that she has to cultivate the mind—the immortal nature of her child.

It is not for any of the purposes of to-day, or even of the coming morrow, that the infant is practised in the art of placing one foot before another, as in the act of walking. It is not for to-day that the child is encouraged to use its muscles, to grasp, and to appropriate whatever is within its reach, or at least whatever may be laid hold of without injury. If the present time was all we had to consider, most assuredly the less grasping, and the less appropriation, the more easy and pleasant would be the office of the nurse. Instead, however, of consulting her own ease,

the mother devotes herself with unremitting assiduity to the cultivation of the bodily faculties of her infant, so that none of its organic functions may suffer from the want of exercise. If she discovers the slightest tendency to the contraction of a muscle, or the distortion of a limb, her whole being is absorbed by apprehensions of the most distressing kind, and all her energies are directed to the means of averting the evils she anticipates for the future. Is it thus, I would ask, on the first discovery of a tendency to impatience, to contradiction, or to revenge? It is but too probable that every positive exhibition of these wrong tendencies is followed by an act of punishment proportioned to the good or evil temper of the nurse, just upon the old-fashioned principle that naughty children must be whipped; but as to the philosophy of such punishment, as well might a crooked limb be forcibly set straight every time it was seen out of place, as the perverse child be simply punished every time it did wrong.

There is no woman blind enough to suppose that in the case of the body, mere momentary correction will be of any lasting use; and why then should the mind, or in other words, the moral character of the child, be treated with less reasoning, and less calculation, than its animal frame?

It is possible, however, so far to extend our ideas into the future, as to lose sight of the intermediate space between the cradle and the grave. And where the mother is so deficient in knowledge of the world, and of human nature in general, as to be a stranger to that wide theatre of stirring interests which we call human life, it must of course be left to circumstances to mould the characters of her children. The result of which, in all probability, will be, that the accidents of life to them will be so various and unexpected, as to surprise them into acting very differently from what their parents had intended.

We cannot but suppose, however, that most women educated under ordinary circumstances, will have learned something of the world before being placed in the situation of mothers; and out of such knowledge arises

a very natural and suitable inquiry, how the children under their care shall be best prepared for entering upon the world such as it is?—not merely for becoming portions of the general mass, for mixing themselves in with the elements of discord too frequently found there, nor even for swelling the tide of popular feeling whatever it may be. All this they would learn too readily, if left to take their own course. But the inquiry a mother has to make is, what are the prevailing evils now existing in the world; what are the good tendencies of the present state of society; and by what means can the mind be so moulded, and the habits so formed, that the child going through the process of education, shall be best enabled to assist in counteracting the one, and helping forward the other?

These are serious inquiries, well worthy a mother's attention, and requiring, in order to act upon them to any useful purpose, much of that observation and tact which has been already urged upon women at an earlier stage of their experience. And here I would venture to observe, that every thing which appeared to me essential to a woman holding the relative situation of a daughter, appeared so more especially when contemplating the same character in that of a wife or a mother; nor could any faculty of the mind be recommended in its exercise to a young and single woman, which might not be made a hundred-fold more valuable to her as a mother.

Whence then can have arisen that most absurd and infatuated notion, that woman, while young and unmarried, may with propriety cultivate her mind and improve her character to almost any extent; but that as a wife she has no need to advance any farther, and as a mother she will do very well if she can but superintend the dressing and undressing of a baby! If, as regards the female sex, there should ever have been ground for the establishment of so erroneous a belief, one would suppose that the simple fact of mothers having the training of boys, as well as girls, committed to their care, might sometimes startle them into a consciousness of the vast amount of responsibility resting upon them. That

single thought, so alarming in its spirit-stirring interest,—that all the statesmen of the rising generation, all the ministers of religion, all public and private gentlemen, as well as all men of business, mechanics, and laborers of every description, will have received, as regards intellectual and moral character, their first bias, and often their strongest and their last, from the training and the influence of a mother, is a consideration which cannot be too deeply impressed even upon the minds of the young, for it is the young more especially who have it in their power to profit by such thoughts; and though none could be more unwilling than the writer of these pages, to fill the imagination of a girl with premature ideas of her own importance, in reference to the future, yet I still believe, that a prospective view of their own responsibilities, properly placed before them, would tend very much to counteract the injurious effects of those trifling and vulgar anticipations of courtship and marriage, which too frequently interfere with the intellectual improvement of the young, and effectually destroy the true dignity of woman.

We know that the further a nation advances in civilization, in science, and in general knowledge, the more intelligence, wisdom, and forethought is required of those who hold the reins of government, and direct the management of institutions for the public good; and what nobler ambition can fill the hearts of British women, than that the next generation of their countrymen should be better grounded in the principles of true knowledge than the last? But, striking and impressive as this idea justly appears in its immediate import, that of the education of daughters is at least as much so in its remoter tendency, because it is to women that we still must look for the training of future generations, and the formation of characters whose names may be surrounded by a glory, or stamped with a blot, in the history of ages yet to come.

And are not these profound and stirring

thoughts for the mother, in her hours of retirement and repose? The human mind, naturally prone to wander beyond the sphere of actual knowledge, becomes lost in a cloud of vague uncertainties, whenever it takes too bold a flight; but here is a field for noble aspirations, in which it is not only lawful, but perfectly reasonable, to indulge; and not the loftiest ambition that ever fired a hero's breast, could be so ardent or so high as that which it is both natural and right for the fond mother to cherish in her "heart of hearts." Yes, it is a great and glorious thought, that the being whose young life is now so tenderly bound up with hers, that not a chord of one can thrill with the minutest touch of feeling, but an answering tone is echoed by the other; that this frail and helpless being, so delicate, so pure, and so beautiful to her, may one day be swelling the ranks of the church-militant on earth, and may eventually join the anthems of triumphant joy which celebrate the admission of the saints to their eternal rest in heaven.

Thus far I have purposely confined my observations chiefly to a mother's *thoughts*. Beyond this, the outer court of the temple of maternal love, lies the inner sanctuary of a mother's *feelings*, whose holy secrets no inexperienced hand should presume to touch. It must be observed, however, that within this sanctuary, and out of these holy secrets, arises the natural spring of all her influence, and of all her power. Assisted only by the force of reason and of principle, a stranger might conduct the steps of childhood to maturity as well as the mother herself; but in the maternal bosom, as has already been observed, is lodged an instinct stronger than any other which is associated with animal existence; and the tendency of these pages will be to show, that wherever there is a strong feeling, there is, if rightly exercised, and under favorable circumstances, a proportionate degree of power,—and that wherever there is power, there is an equal amount of responsibility.

CHAPTER II.

AUTHORITY, INFLUENCE, AND EXAMPLE.

It is a great point gained, in studying the true "science of life," to know when to be little and when to be great. In venturing to write upon the duties of woman as a wife, I have been charged with wishing to place her in too low a scale. Perhaps I have not been so fortunate as to make my ideas fully understood; for—although I still think that, as a wife, woman should place herself, instead of running the risk of *being placed*, in a secondary position—as a mother, I do not see how it is possible for her to be too dignified, or to be treated with too much respect.

Yet it is of the utmost importance to those who undertake the management of children, that they should have clear ideas of the difference betwixt authority and influence, and of the necessary dependence of both upon example.

Although, strictly speaking, there can be no such thing as authority without influence, yet when we speak of authority simply as such, we mean nothing more than that there exists, for the time being, a power in one party to enforce a command, and a willingness in the other to obey. There are kind and gentle mothers who think that authority has little or nothing to do with the education of their children; and there are, on the other hand, persons educated in the old schools who consider authority as the only instrument they have to work with, in producing the effect which mental and moral discipline are desired to produce upon the young. It is common with individuals of the latter class to speak of "breaking the natural will," as if the will was an excrescence which had to be removed, or a branch which had to be lopped off, before any good could be expected to be done. Hence those horrible whippings of former times, those shuttings up in dark chambers, and those other varieties of mental and bodily punishment,—all which had about as much efficacy in softening the natural temper and subduing the spirit of pride, as the sprinkling on of water has in the extin-

guishing of burning coals. Indeed, one can scarcely imagine any thing more congenial to the formation of desperate and malignant resolutions, than to be forcibly snatched up,—as some of us can remember to have been,—thrust, struggling, into a dark and unoccupied room, and there locked up, and left; so that, scream as we would, (and few, under such circumstances, would not do their best,) the sound of our distress was beyond the reach of any human ear.

Happily for the human race, however, these times are past, and the too severe application of direct and unsparing punishment is not the fashion of the present day. I say *happily* for the human race, because it is not possible for the most unbounded indulgence, as a system, to produce consequences so lamentable in their general effects, as a system of harshness and severity practised upon the tender and susceptible nature of youth. To those kind and gentle mothers who consider mere authority as too stern an instrument to work with in the training up of their children, we must then in justice grant, that theirs is the lesser evil of the two.

Where this evil on the mother's part arises from excessive tenderness, and unwillingness to give pain, it will perhaps be a little startling to hear it asserted, that if she set herself to devise a plan for ensuring the future misery of her child, next in degree of efficacy, though widely different in nature, to that which has already been alluded to, she could not find one more effectual than that of neglecting to instil into its mind the necessity of implicit obedience. Once convinced of this necessity, which it easily may be, by never being allowed to call in question the authority of those under whose care it is placed, the child grows up without the least idea that the rule of obedience is a hardship, or in fact without any idea of obedience at all; for it submits habitually to rightful authority, just as we submit every day to those circumstances over which we have no control. In this manner the habit of submitting the natural will is imperceptibly acquired, a world of fruitless and painful contention is avoided,

and the child really enjoys the advantage of being constantly under the direction of wisdom, forethought, and experience, superior to its own.

The maintenance of this unyielding authority on the part of the mother, requires, it would seem, some little tact and skill; for some who are the most imperative in their commands, are in reality the least obeyed. That hasty slaps, loud talking, and harsh words, have nothing whatever to do with the system of discipline here recommended, it is scarcely necessary to say; neither that weakest and most fruitless sort of pleading, which consists of a perpetual repetition of "Now do," and "Now don't;" and still less do threatenings and bribes enter into the scheme proposed; but a steady and consistent method begun in early infancy, and never on any occasion whatever departed from, of requiring obedience to the parent's wishes, simply as such, accompanied by a strict regard to clearness, consistency, and truth, in making those wishes known.

To a child trained up in this manner, obedience is so easy, that it no more thinks of questioning the mother's right to direct its actions, than it quarrels with the nurse because she stretches out her arms to prevent its falling. Nor is there more severity in the exercise of such authority, than in the protecting care which preserves an infant from corporeal harm. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of the whims and wishes of a child, would, if it were possible to gratify them, be productive of more pain than pleasure; and thus it is necessary, even for its happiness, that they should be subjected to the decision of another. Let the little hero, before he is able to walk, thrust away the hand of the nurse as he will, she suffers no symptoms of vexation on his part to prevent her necessary assistance, because she knows, and in this she judges for herself without consulting him, that the child would be more hurt by a fall, than by being the subject of a mere momentary vexation. And the mother knows, or rather she ought to know, that upon the same principle her child would suffer more

by discovering that he had the power to contradict and oppose his mother's wishes, than by being deprived of some little gratification of fancy or desire, which in all probability would please him only for a moment.

By the habit of obedience too, when practised towards a judicious and consistent mother, the child soon learns, as if by a sort of instinct, what is the general nature of its mother's wishes, so that it will often combine the pleasure of anticipating them, with the duty of compliance.

All weak persons unacquainted with the world, and disappointed in their own experience, are naturally miserable when unsupported, and left to themselves. What then must be the suffering of a child whose own will is its only law, and who has not learned what is right and wrong, nor even what is possible and impossible to be had, or done! We see its sufferings written on its anxious, irritated countenance. We behold in its manner, alternately irresolute and determined, the caprice and waywardness by which it is disturbed. We hear the agony of its disappointment after each successive attempt to do what was impracticable, or what was fraught with danger and pain; and we ask of the mother, in common kindness, to establish for her child a rule of safety and of peace, and to let that rule be—implicit obedience to her own authority.

It is distressing, even to the casual observer, to mark, in the impatient, feverish, irritable character of such a child, the wretchedness which is preparing for it in after life; and not in after life alone, for each day is fraught with suffering to the little being who is thus allowed to be a law unto itself, before it has the means of understanding what is right or safe, pleasant or possible, to possess. Yes, we can many of us feelingly attest what it was to spend a day—and happy for those with whom a day was all—in company with the child who was suffered to crush the hot patty into its mouth, to make tea for its mamma, and consequently to pour the scalding water upon its breast, to climb the edge of the round table upon which soup had been

placed, to burn its fingers by roasting its own apple at the fire, to eat more at every meal than it had power to digest, and to allay the cravings of a diseased appetite by having one hand perpetually supplied with sugarcandy, and the other with sweet-cake ; to finish all, by sitting up late at night because it did not choose to go to bed. Nor need we add to this catalogue those offences of which the child takes no cognizance, such as gingerbread stuck upon the visiter's chair, and butter smeared upon her dress ; nor those dreadful eruptions of passions and distress which take place whenever offences abound, so that the parents, or perhaps an irritated father, thinks it necessary to *correct* the child, as it is called. Neither is it necessary to dwell upon the multiplication of these evils where the family is numerous, and confusion is consequently worse confounded. I would only add, that to all these, and more a hundred-fold, the fond mother has subjected her children, from failing to enforce the simple and pleasant duty of implicit obedience, which would have made all things comparatively easy. Not that I am visionary enough to assert that wherever authority is consistently maintained there will be at all times, and on the instant, a willing obedience, with an absence of wrong tempers, feverish ailments, and perverseness of disposition ; but I am confident in asserting, that the greatest kindness we can do to a helpless, ignorant, and inexperienced being, is to furnish it with a guide upon which it may safely and implicitly depend, and that this guide to a child ought to be the undisputed authority of its parents, or of those whom they may deem worthy of being deputed to act in their stead.

Then again it is *prompt* obedience that is required, for no other will answer the end of producing family concord, and individual satisfaction. A lingering, pleading, lengthened-out dispute, betwixt the mother and the child, even when the mother gains the mastery in the end, is the very opposite in its results to what all rational parents would desire ; and the little girl who keeps her nurse waiting for her a whole hour, because she entreats

her mother every ten minutes that she may stay up a little longer, has to be carried off to bed at nine o'clock, with as much screaming and opposition as there would have been at eight, and with the additional injury to her health and temper, of having suffered the loss of her natural rest ; with the still worse addition of having discovered, that by pleading and coaxing she can overcome her mother's influence, and set aside her determination to enforce what is right.

Habit, which is said to be second nature with all, is almost more than that with children. Thus the habit of resisting and disputing authority, by whatever means it may be done, lets in a tide of evil consequences not to be arrested by any occasional resumption of the power which has been voluntarily resigned. The maintenance of authority is like the preservation of a string of beads—break but the “silken cord on which they hang,” and the pearls are scattered in disorder, if not irretrievably lost. By suffering the rule of obedience to be set aside, an endless catalogue of evil tempers, vexations, disappointments, artifices, mean subterfuges, and even the worst of all bribery—the bribery of self-interested endearments—are allowed to take the place of that steady, calm, and undeviating submission, which costs no pain, and requires no sacrifice, simply because it is habitual.

There is no spectacle in life more deplorable, and few more calculated to awaken feelings of contempt, than that of an undisciplined and pettish temper fretting against and resisting what is inevitable ; and yet all this folly, as well as the suffering with which it is always associated, is necessarily consequent upon that error in the management of childhood, which allows of rightful authority being made the subject of resistance and dispute. On the other hand, we never contemplate human nature in a more noble or dignified position, than when, under the dispensation of Divine, and consequently indisputable power, it yields a willing and prompt obedience.

It may be said that the obedience of a child

to those who superintend its infant years, has nothing whatever to do with the submission of beings more rational and mature to laws which they acknowledge to be divine; but I am fully persuaded that the habit of rebellion against human authority, allowed in early life, will render the habit of submission to a higher Power of more difficult attainment in after years; while, on the other hand, the same proportion of opposite results will follow from a prompt and undeviating subjection of the weaker to the stronger, during those early stages of existence when it is impossible that the reasons for enforcing a parent's commands should be fully understood.

Among the records preserved to us of the dealings of God with man in the early history of the world, nothing is more striking than the manner in which this principle of unquestioning obedience was enforced. Until the rule of simple obedience was acknowledged, nothing could be done towards the development of those higher principles which were afterwards to enlighten and regenerate mankind. It was the entire submission of the ignorant to the wise, of the weak to the strong, of the erring to the steadfast, of the guilty to the stainless and pure, that was required, before any more profound and expansive system of discipline could be brought to operate upon the different characters and habits of mankind; and although the child will soon, too soon, discover that its earthly parent is not so perfect as its young affection had taught it to believe, still, until it can bring into competition with that parent an equal amount of ability to discern betwixt the evil and the good, it ought never to be permitted to feel that there is a way of escape from the rule of implicit obedience.

And this obedience, I repeat, may be rendered as easy as it is to submit to the darkness of night at a certain hour, or to the cold of winter at a certain season of the year. We do not often see children go into convulsions of rage because a shower of rain is falling, and thus preventing their expected walk. Convince them that it actually does rain, and,

feeling that the calamity, though great, is inevitable, they submit accordingly, and often return with a cheerfulness which might instruct their seniors, to the amusements or occupations which they had been busy with before. In this case they submit without murmuring, because they know that no pleading of theirs, no coaxing, no bribery, ever did make the rain cease at their bidding; and there is no doubt but they would evince the same prompt and cheerful submission to parental authority, if it was exercised in a consistent and undeviating manner.

It is true we sometimes hear a short and sudden sigh from the child who is called away at a certain hour to leave a flattering circle in the drawing-room, for the obscurity of the nursery, and I am far from supposing that habitual obedience never costs an effort at the moment it is required; but I speak of the effort as one which by *comparison* is reduced to almost nothing; and I appeal for the truth of this assertion to the cheerfulness, serenity, and absence of unnecessary disappointment, observable in children who are brought up under that system of unquestioning obedience, which is the only true foundation of all discipline in the management of children, of all social comfort in their homes, and of all satisfaction to those who have the trouble and anxiety of watching over them.

Although the exercise of that authority which is here so earnestly recommended, might seem, from its direct and undeviating character, to be one of the easiest things in the world, it is, as has already been observed, one of the most difficult consistently to carry out; because the natural weakness of the mother's heart is ever tempting her to risk the future good of her child, for the sake of its immediate gratification. And here, if ever, we see the necessity there is for women to attain that self-mastery, and to cultivate that moral courage, without which they are incapable of working out any lasting good by their influence over others.

It is that little sigh we have just alluded to, that appealing look perhaps through the mist of tears, or, more than all, that sweet

spirit of resignation with which the child throws up its game not yet played out, and turns to hang upon the neck of its nurse, which melts the mother's firmness, and makes her determine that, for once at least, its unresisting compliance shall be rewarded by a deviation from the accustomed rule. Thus the poor child learns how to appeal another time. It learns to anticipate these deviations, and to consider itself aggrieved when they are not allowed. Thus, in short, the silken cord is broken, and the pearls lie scattered.

Thus too we see, that however devoted to the happiness of her children the fond mother may be, however amiable herself, however well-intentioned with regard to the performance of her maternal duties, there must be in her management of a family a prospective reference to the future, a calculation as to cause and effect, and a power of self-government, so as in all things to make the lesser subservient to the greater good; all which an education of accomplishments, and a youth of visiting and vanity, are but little calculated to supply. It remains therefore to be the more earnestly urged upon the mothers of England, that so far as they are able, they should look well to these things, and endeavor to obviate, in the education of their children, the evils they have to deplore in their own.

Our next subject of consideration is influence, and here we come at once to the great secret of woman's power in her social and domestic character. By absolute and mere authority it is little indeed that woman can do, because the weakness of her bodily frame, and the natural susceptibility of her feelings, render her wholly unfit for wielding the weapon of authority to any useful purpose, and especially in her management of boys. Indeed it is a sight most pitiful to contemplate, where a poor feeble mother, unsupported by any moral or intellectual influence, deals out among her unheeding children, alternate slaps and thrusts, accompanied by the tone and language of command, without its apparently anticipated results; while she wonders in her own mind, and sometimes inquires of

her friends, how it can be that her children are more rebellious than others, though undergoing either scolding or chastisement every day of their lives. Such for the most part is the situation of woman when attempting to exercise authority without having obtained influence; for though authority alone may be made available in the management of infancy, no sooner is the discovery made, that the requisites for maintaining influence are wanting in the mother, than she becomes in some degree an object of contempt, and her commands are consequently set at naught.

It is just possible that there should be among women some of those stern, cold, commanding characters, to which authority, simply as such, appropriately belongs. Happily, however, such mothers are but rarely found, and, where they are, present a strange deviation from the usual course of nature, the contemplation of which has the effect of making us admire the more the harmony and beauty of that course as it most uniformly flows.

If, however, authority belongs as a natural right to such characters, the finer and more vital elements of moral influence never can be theirs; and to imagine the tenderness of childhood committed to a mother of this description, is to call up a picture too revolting for the mind to dwell upon without shrinking and horror. Such a mother may possibly govern the actions of her children by the exercise of absolute power, but she can never know the sweet security of moral influence, which operates as effectually when distant and unseen, as when every act of youth is watched by the most scrutinizing eye.

At the root of all good influence is example. The conduct, mind, and spirit of the mother give a tone to that domestic atmosphere by which the soul in its early experience is sustained. Where that atmosphere is impregnated with the elements of discord, arising from the rude passions and wrong tempers of the parents, and of the household in general, it is impossible that the spirit of childhood should be kept in a healthy state: nor even where the members of a family are addicted

to melancholy and reserve, can the younger branches be said to exist in a genial or wholesome air.

It has been beautifully observed by the author of *Home Education*, a book which all mothers ought to read, that "the recollection of a thoroughly happy childhood—other advantages not wanting—is the very best preparation, moral and intellectual, with which to encounter the duties and cares of real life. A sunshine childhood is an auspicious inheritance, with which, as a fund, to commence trading in practical wisdom and active goodness. It is a great thing only to have known by experience that tranquil, temperate felicity is actually attainable on earth. How many have pursued a reckless course, because, or chiefly because, they early learned to think of happiness as a chimera, and believed momentary gratification to be the only substitute placed within the reach of man! Practicable happiness is much oftener thrown away than really snatched from us; but it is the most likely to be pursued, overtaken, and husbanded, by those who already, and during some considerable period of their lives, have been happy. To have known nothing but misery, is the most portentous condition under which human nature can pursue its course."

It is a fact universally acknowledged, that the healthy tone of the domestic atmosphere, as well as the general cheerfulness of the household, depend very much upon the mother. In her capacity of a wife, and mistress of a family, she is the one responsible being for the general arrangement and combination of the different elements of social and domestic comfort. She is the arbiter in all trivial disputes, the soother of all jarring and discord, the explainer of all misunderstandings, and, in short, the mainspring of the machinery by which social and domestic happiness is constantly supplied, both in her household, and within the circle she adorns.

We cannot, perhaps, better describe the effect of moral atmosphere upon the mind, than by that of a pleasant or unpleasant day,

spent in the country, upon the bodily frame. Upon the health and spirits of some individuals the weather has, at all times, a powerful effect; but while earnestly pursuing our accustomed avocations,—more especially as they are now generally pursued in busy towns,—we have little time to think about the weather, or to yield ourselves to the sensations it is calculated to excite. But when we go out from home for the purpose of enjoying an excursion, the case is widely different. With a cold east wind blowing full in our faces, and a thick canopy of clouds obscuring the sun, we look in vain for beauty or gladness, either in the earth or sky,—and, sinking into a gloomy sort of silence, we think only of the rheumatism which seems to be twitching at every limb, of the friend we have left behind as the only companion we really cared for, or of the clothing and provisions we have happened to bring as being the least suitable in every respect for a cold day in the country. Arrived at the place of destination, our feet are benumbed with cold—the grass is yet damp with the last night's rain—a general shivering, with an impulse to get away, creeps over us—we grow caustic and bitter in our remarks, and finally end the day with the commencement of a severe cold.

When the same party—precisely the same in number, character, and means of enjoyment—set out on the same excursion in beautiful weather, how different are their bodily sensations, and consequently the tone of every mind! The scenery through which they pass is the same in every respect, except that the *atmosphere* is changed. A balmy air breathes over them, laden with the odors of fresh opening flowers—sunshine smiles upon every object—and, as they pass along, vexations, disappointments, and drawbacks to enjoyment, are all forgotten. What if the friend who had promised to accompany them be left behind? They feel no want of him. What if their viands are the homeliest or the least approved? Their appetites, sharpened beyond their usual vigor, are equal to the provision made for them, whatever that may be.

As to rheumatism, they forget that ever it assailed their peace,—while influenza and ague are calamities the mention of which awakens only a smile. It is especially on such days that charity abounds—that benevolence embraces those whom it would have spurned before—that ambition, wealth, and fame, become as nothing in comparison with good-humor and good-will; and all things being blended happily together by the magical influence of what is called a pleasant day, the party return to their homes with health and energies renewed, and not unfrequently both better and wiser than when they first went out.

It must be remembered that the sensations here described are continued only for a day; whereas those with whom we live, and especially those with whom we associate in early life, affect us by their influence and example perhaps for many years.

I repeat, then, it is to woman that we look for so directing the various capabilities with which she is naturally endowed, as to create around her a moral atmosphere, as powerful in its effect upon the mind, as that which has just been described is upon the body, and consequently upon both.

Much has been said, and justly, of the importance, to women, of good talents and well-cultivated minds; yet it must be allowed that not always do the wisest women—nor, unfortunately, the most pious—make the best mothers. A simple, straight-forward character, will sometimes evince infinitely more skill in the management of children than some of those whose minds are stored with systems of education. The fact is, these systems, unless naturally and appropriately conducted, are not intelligible to children. The aim and object of the mother remains a mystery to them—while they distinctly feel, and long remember, all that is disagreeable in the mode of administering the elaborate, and to them incomprehensible, discipline to which they are subjected.

The wisest women are not always best acquainted with the language of infant thought, nor is it the most pious who are quickest to

detect the indications of peculiar character and temperament in early life. It is a lamentable fact, that half the excellent advice of good people addressed to children, as well as to the illiterate and the poor, falls from their lips unheeded, for want of being adapted to the understandings and habits of their hearers. "To-morrow is my birthday," said a little girl of my acquaintance to a friend who had placed her on his knee. "Shall I come and help you to keep it?" asked the gentleman. "Oh!" replied the child, with the utmost astonishment, "we don't keep it. It goes away again directly." Now, if, in so common and familiar an expression as that of *keeping a birthday*, there could be so total a want of understanding betwixt the two parties referred to, how often must such misapprehensions take place on subjects less familiar, and in themselves less comprehensible, to the young!

It is thus that the highly gifted, whose ideas are accustomed to flow through lofty or intricate channels, so often fail to produce the anticipated results in their tuition of the young; while persons with common abilities and simplicity of character are frequently able to engage their attention and obtain their confidence, simply from the fact of their being understood. Thus, then, we clearly perceive, that in our means of conveying instruction to children, there must be a certain degree of adaptation to the germs of thought and feeling already beginning to unfold themselves in their characters. There must be adaptation to their half-formed impressions, and to the limited scope of their ideas, in order to our certainty that their mental faculties are going along with us in our efforts to impart instruction.

But far beyond this, is our endeavors to obtain influence, is the power of sympathizing with those whom we would instruct or guide; and in this instance, above all others, we see that from her natural endowments, especially from her capability both for profound and lively sympathy, woman is admirably fitted for the part she has to fill in social life. If influence be the secret of her power,

sympathy is the secret of her influence—sympathy with nature in its trials, temptations, sufferings, and enjoyment, experienced in a degree far beyond what man is either fitted for, or capable of affording.

It is of the highest importance, too, that this sympathy should be exhibited through the medium of tenderness, so as to inspire a confidence on the part of the young, in the mother's undeviating desire to promote their happiness. A single suspicion that she prefers her own good to that of others—but, above all, that she prefers giving pain to giving pleasure, or finding fault to expressing approbation, is just so much weight taken from her good influence—just so much impulse given to rebellion or contempt.

How beautiful, then, in its adaptation to the situation in which she is placed, and the duties she has to perform, is that instinct of maternal love, which, from its intensity and depth, its all-pervading and inextinguishable vitality, so lives and breathes through every act, thought, word, and look of the fond mother, that sooner would her infant doubt its own existence, than question that of her untiring love! And, thanks be to the Author of all our blessings! this unbounded supply, which no reasoning and no power of mere human agency could create, is never wanting in the mother's hour of need. That she has her hour of need, none can dispute, who know any thing of the care of infancy and childhood. Yes; she has it in sickness, when her feeble strength is exhausted, and yet she watches on. She has it in poverty, when hunger craves the bread she is breaking into little eager hands. She has it when, night after night, she is called up from her downy pillow to still the impatient cry. She has it when, in after years, there comes not the full measure of affection which she had expended back into her own bosom. And she has it when disease has crushed the beauty of her opening flower, or when she looks into the casket of her infant's mind, and finds that the gem is wanting there. Yet, under all these circumstances, when money cannot bribe attention, when friendship can-

not purchase care, when entreaties cannot ensure the necessary aid, the mother is rich in resources and untiring in effort, simply because her love is of that kind which cannot fail.

To a certain extent—and would that for the sake of kind but injudicious mothers it were further than it is—the mere conviction of this love existing in the mother's heart will ensure a corresponding degree of influence. But no sooner do children begin to think, to compare, and to judge for themselves—and they are sometimes better judges than we suppose—no sooner do they begin to form an estimate of their mother's mind, of her sense or her want of sense, than these ideas mix themselves with that of her affection, and her influence is then submitted to a new, and infinitely more trying test.

Children seldom love long those whom they are unable to respect, and thus a fond and foolish mother invariably brings upon herself the neglect, and often the contempt of her family. I knew a fine boy, just emerging from childhood, who whispered to a little playmate the discovery he had made, that his mother was, to use his own expression, "quite a simpleton." The mingling of tenderness with shame, in the manner in which he communicated this lamentable fact, did honor both to his head and heart; and could the mother have known or understood the melancholy blank which succeeded to the warmest admiration in the mind of her boy, and the hard struggles he had afterwards to wage betwixt his affection and his contempt, she would surely have regretted, even if she had done nothing more, the many opportunities which had been wasted in early life, for cultivating her understanding, and rendering her talents more worthy of respect.

There must then be a blending of confidence with esteem in the feelings of the child, in order to ensure a lasting influence to the mother—of confidence founded upon a conviction of her sympathy and love, and of esteem for her own character, both in an intellectual and moral point of view.

On the subject of example, much more remains to be said, when that of religious influence shall come under consideration ; but it is, perhaps, most in keeping with the observations already made, to remind the reader here, that there is a bad, as well as a good influence—that influence there must be, of one kind or other, arising out of the close connection and constant association of the mother and the child ; and that where good sense and good principle, are wanting in the mother's conduct, the absence of these essentials to good influence, especially the latter, will, in all probability, tell upon the characters of her children in after life to an alarming extent. In vain might such a mother train her children according to the most approved and best established rules. In vain might she admonish them, though in the language of sincerity and love. In vain might she lay down for them a system of the purest morals, or even preach to them a holier law derived from the Bible itself. The unsophisticated mind, and clear discriminating eye of childhood, are not to be thus deceived. Long before a child knows how to make use of the words consistency and truth, it possesses a discerning spirit, to perceive where consistency is deviated from, where truth is violated ; and when this is the case in the conduct of the mother, what hold can she possibly have upon the confidence and esteem of her children ?

We should remember, too, that impressions are with children the data from which they afterwards reason ; and long before they are capable of what may be strictly denominated conviction, they have in all probability received impressions never to be effaced. Could we look into the mind of a child, and examine the tablet of its memory, we should see by that faithful record, that each day had produced a particular set of impressions, even at a very early age. We discover this from their prattle in their waking hours, and often from the image which evidently flits before their mental vision, when they lie down to sleep. It is, therefore, by impressions chiefly, that the mother has to work ; and

well is it for her, and for all who have to do with the management of children, if, while delivering lectures to them upon what is right and wrong, they do not receive the impression that it is very tedious and very disagreeable to be instructed how to be good. Well too, if, while the mother is most careful to instil into their minds by verbal instruction, all manner of good principles, they do not, from her conduct, receive the impression that these things may be well enough for little boys and girls, but that one of the great privileges of men and women is to be able to do without them. Yet, if such be the power of influence on the side of bad example, what must it be where there exists a perfect harmony between the character and conduct of the mother, and the lessons she endeavors to inculcate ; or rather, where the lessons themselves, few, and short, and perfectly adapted to the understanding of childhood, are but a commentary upon her own life, and that of her husband ?

So much has been said, and so beautifully, on the subject of female influence, in a work entitled "*Woman's Mission*," that were I to yield to the temptation of quoting from its eloquent pages, I might easily be led on to transcribe the whole. I will, however, content myself with a passage from a French writer,* whose authority is frequently referred to in that volume, where he says, "It is of the utmost consequence to remark, that in children, sentiment precedes intelligence ; the first answer to the maternal smile is the first dawn of intelligence ; the first sensation is the responding caress. Comprehension begins in feeling ; hence, to her who first arouses the feelings, who first awakens the tenderness, must belong the happiest influences. She is not, however, to teach virtue, but to inspire it. This is peculiarly the province of woman. What she wishes us to be, she begins by making us love, and love begets unconscious imitation. What is a child in relation to a tutor ? An ignorant being whom he is called upon to in-

* Amié Martin.

struct. What is a child in relation to a mother? An immortal being, whose soul it is her business to train for immortality. Good schoolmasters make good scholars,—good mothers make good men; here is the difference of their missions."

Few subjects are more hackneyed, or more common to all writers, than that of maternal influence. Perhaps it may be one of those, which, admitting of no question, and incapable of arousing systematic opposition, wants the interest of perpetual excitement, which party feeling gives to so many others less worthy of regard. It is not, like too much of the religion of the world, kept alive by the activity of contention for those points upon which it is possible to disagree, and only dormant with regard to others upon which all are of one mind; for on the subject of maternal influence, nature, reason, and religion speak ever the same language, and would equally disown a violation of this great moral law. Yet as a strange anomaly presented by human life, there are women, and kind and well-meaning women too, who seem not to be aware that the sacred name of mother entails upon them an amount of responsibility proportioned to the influence which it places in their hands. There are mothers, and not a few, who appear to consider themselves called upon to do any thing, rather than attend to the training of their children; who find time for morning calls, when they have none for the nursery or the school-room; and even make the dresses of their infants, rather than answer questions dictated by their opening minds.

It has often been said that no man, however depraved or vicious, need be utterly despaired of, with whom his mother's influence still lingers on the side of virtue. On the couch of sickness, the battle-field, and even the gloomy scaffold, it is the image of his mother which still haunts the memory of the dying man; and in the hour of strong temptation, when guilty comrades urge the treacherous or the bloody deed, it is to forget the warning of his mother's voice, that the half-persuaded victim drinks a deeper draught.

If in scenes like these a mother's influence is the last preserving link, how sweetly does it operate when life is new, and experience yet unsullied by any deep or lasting stains! How sweetly does it operate, like a kind of second conscience, more tender, more forgiving, yet still more appealing than the first, in all those minor perplexities and trials of human life, where judgment, bribed by inclination, would persuade the unpractised traveller that the most flowery path must surely be the best! It is in the beginning, and the end of evil, that this power, though often unseen, and purely spiritual, operates with a potency peculiarly its own—in the beginning, to win us back by that simple and habitual reference of a child to what would have been its mother's choice; and in the end, by that last lingering of expiring hope—that hovering, as it were, around our pillow, of some kind angel, reminding us at once of the tenderness of earthly love, and of the efficacy of that which is divine.

There seems to be connected with the human mind, and almost essential to its wants in this probationary state, an idea of the protection of some guardian spirit always near, whose peculiar care we have the happiness to be; and the closest resemblance we find in reality to this consoling and delightful thought, is the influence of a mother, often felt more powerfully when absent, than when under the inspection of her ever watchful eye. Nor can change of scene or lapse of time obliterate the impression, simply because it was the first, and made at a time when the heart was a tender and willing recipient to the impress of affection. Thus it visits the rude sailor on the stormy deep, in the long watches of the night; it travels with the pilgrim through the desert, and cheers him in the stranger's home; and if it does not check the man of worldly calculations when tempted to defraud, it sometimes brings him, on his couch of nightly rest, to question whether he has done right. It gives music to the voice of fame, when it echoes on a mother's ear; sweetness to the bridal wreath, when a mother binds it on a daughter's brow; honor to

the dignity, a mother showed us how to wear; and value to the wealth, a mother taught us how to use.

I speak not from experience, for to me the precious link was broken before I felt its power, or could appreciate its worth; but if an aching want of that which nature pines for, if a dim vision of unseen beauty haunting perpetually the path of life, if a standard of perfect though unknown excellence imparting stability and form to the hope of its existence on earth;—if all these give a title to describe the value of a mother's influence, then, from the recollections of a desolate childhood, uncherished by maternal tenderness, surely I may speak, and not in vain.

CHAPTER III

THE USE OF A MIND.

It is the fashion of the present day to direct every means, and to force every effort, to some obvious and immediate result. Thus education has come to be regarded as a process by which the mind is filled, rather than one by which it is exercised in the use of its faculties.

Education is also too frequently considered as a thing which can be compressed into almost any given space of time, by dint of labor and industry; and thus parents who indulge a foolish ambition to see their children pushed on to be clever, make it a practice to stipulate, in sending them to school, that they shall learn every thing within the compass of human attainment, except how to use their minds. They complain, too, sometimes, of the high terms of education; and various modes of bargaining, and bringing down those of the different schools to which they apply, are resorted to, with little compunction on the part of parents. Yet when we consider the situation of those who have to receive under their care children who have scarcely been prepared for the process of instruction by one useful habit, or

one rational idea; when we consider, too, that in the course of a very few years, perhaps two or three, the habits they have acquired have to be uprooted, an entirely new foundation of moral and intellectual character laid, and upon this a superstructure erected, composed of every branch of learning, and adorned with every accomplishment, and all this with but slender capacity on the part of the child, and no desire whatever to be any thing but well dressed, well fed, and exceedingly comfortable; I would ask, what money could repay the labor of converting a succession of such children, year after year, into what are called, highly educated men and women? And even if by dint of indefatigable effort on the part of those who teach, there should now and then be one child sent home with a memory loaded to excess—nay, literally crammed with names and dates, and all that is comprised under the head of school-learning—how few, even out of this small number, find, in the common walks of life, a use for half the acquirements they have so laboriously attained!

I speak not as wishing to reduce the compass of human learning within a narrower circle than it fills at present. Far from it. My idea is, that we never can learn too much, provided that in the acquirement of one thing, we do not neglect another more important; and there will always be, among the many, some minds sufficiently gifted and comprehensive to profit by and repay an extreme amount of culture. But in confining my remarks, as I still wish they should be understood, chiefly to persons of the middle class in Great Britain, one half of whom, supposing society to be divided only into three parts, are connected more or less with business, and subject to all the variety of circumstance which that association entails; I confess I do not see how the mere acquirement of learning, as generally taught in schools, is an indispensable requisite. Indeed, I should have supposed that the use of the faculty of observation in common things, the exercise of ingenuity, and the gradual introduction to the understanding of

botany, chemistry, mechanism, and natural history in general, with an habitual readiness in the use of resources, and the application of means to ends, would have been a kind of training, especially if connected with half the amount of school-learning usually bargained for, quite as likely to make clever merchants, and men of business, as well as clever mistresses of families, as that system of education which confines all learning to what may be stored in the memory, and acquired from books.

In the use of a mind, it is very evident that those who teach in schools can have little opportunity for conveying instruction. Their sphere of observation is necessarily limited; each day presents objects little differing from the last; and all those unexpected and novel events which excite interest and inquiry in a private family, it is the aim of school-discipline to prevent, lest the attention of the pupils should be diverted, and lessons consequently hindered by interruption.

The use of a mind, however, is just that important part of education which a mother is so circumstanced as to be the one only being to teach with facility and success. There are few fathers who have it in their power to do more than advise and direct in the education of their children; but the mother has a twofold advantage in her presence in the midst of her family, and in the natural influence she exercises over the minds of her children. Oh! but the mothers of England are too busy in the present day. There is really so much to be done for the public good, so many subscriptions to be raised, so many charities to be attended to, so many public meetings, committees, and societies of every description to be kept up, that in large towns especially, the mother has literally no time—absolutely none—to attend to the instruction of her own children.

Perhaps it never enters into the minds of these excellent ladies, that a little more private good done to the individuals immediately under their care, would prevent a great deal of their public charity being required—that a little more training of children to meet

their circumstances whatever they may be, to act with consideration to others, to contrive, to economize, to manage, and to be contented and cheerful in their appointed lot, would prevent much of the extravagance, helplessness, and misery which exist in the world.

I appeal to those who have had much to do with the poor and the destitute, and I ask, whether the most trying cases which have come under their notice, have not generally arisen from the sufferings of the well-meaning, and the helpless? This portion of the community seem doomed to be trampled upon by the designing and the wicked; and though far from wishing to keep back the smallest mite that may be passing into public channels for their good, yet I feel assured we should do more for their ultimate benefit, by teaching to children, and through them, as they grow up, to servants and dependents, the readiest means of turning all common things to the best account, than by collecting thousands upon thousands for the relief of the distressed.

The nature of the present times, the condition of our country, the frequent downfall of the rich from affluence and ease, and the uncertainty on every hand of greater stability in the interests of trade and commerce, are powerful calls upon the mothers of England, to turn their attention more earnestly to the preparation of individual character for such private and social revolutions, as there appears every reason to anticipate.

It is urged by some women, that they have their evening parties, and their morning calls, to attend to; by others, that they have their domestic arrangements; by a vast number, that they have not health to contend with children; and by still more, that they have not ability. To ask such women why they happened to get married, is an impertinence one is rather tempted to commit; for if attending to morning calls, or even visiting, be the paramount duty of life, a single woman might certainly discharge this duty, with more propriety, and with less hindrance, than a married one. If the management of a house be urged as more important than the

management of an immortal mind, the situation of a housekeeper would have been more suitable than that of a wife or a mother to the woman who offers this excuse. The plea of want of ability is a strong condemnation to her who did not find this out in time; and that of want of health, though, unlike the others, deserving tenderness and sympathy, affords no reason for entire exemption except in extreme cases; because a mother's influence, if once established, is often known to operate beneficially, even when she herself is confined to a couch of sickness.

There is in reality scarcely any thing which ought to stand in the way of a mother's constant and strict attention to the training of her children; because she is in reality *the* person whose influence over them is the most powerful; and whatever school she may select for them, whatever teachers she may choose, she is *the* person in whose hands their mental and spiritual welfare is placed.

Since then there is no escape from this imperative duty, let us ask what are the particular advantages and facilities for discharging it, which the mother enjoys beyond others? In the first place, she begins with the unbounded affection of her children—an affection which sees her beautiful, and believes her perfect; which questions not the wisdom that flows from her lips, and still less can doubt the truth of what she tells. What other teacher of youth, I would ask, can begin the process of education with these advantages? Instead then of leaving it to others to do, what she is sometimes glad of any plea to escape from, she ought to thank God, and take courage, that her confessedly arduous undertaking has thus been rendered comparatively easy by the dispensations of an all-wise Creator.

If, like the governess, the mother had to begin with strangeness, and perhaps with repulsion, how different would her situation be! She would then have to feel her way, to win by watchfulness and care every inch of ground, and to study infant characteristics, as well as to disguise her own, in order to obtain the slightest influence. But happily

for the mother, her children love her as she is. Her kiss could not be more welcome, if her cheek was that of Hebe, nor could the wisdom of a Socrates inspire them with greater respect than they feel for hers. How cruel then to her children, and how negligent of this beautiful provision made by Divine Providence, both for them and for her, is that shrinking from, or that indifference on the part of the mother to a duty which nature so evidently points out as hers; and that willing consigning of her children's early education to those who begin the task, and most frequently pursue it to the end, under circumstances so much less favorable.

But after all, the duty of education is one which cannot be deputed to another in very early life, unless the mother entirely absents herself, or becomes a mere nonentity in the nursery. The process of education is going on every day, because the infant mind is every day receiving impressions, learning to compare, and gradually maturing in every way; and as a child naturally loves its mother best, it will receive from her the deepest and most lasting of those impressions, which are to give a bias to its character, and perhaps eventually determine its destiny for this world and the next. There is then no escape. Neglect may tell upon the character, as well as care; and since the mother must be the one responsible being as regards her child, why not set about in earnest, and with cheerfulness and hope, the task of teaching it, in the first place, how to use its own mind?

Inspired by a laudable desire to be the early, and perhaps the sole instructors of their children, some well-meaning and industrious mothers begin with lettered cards and books, to teach the first rudiments of spelling and reading, before their children are capable of attaching a single right idea to the words they read; and it often happens that those parents who are the most sparing, and the least apt, in the communication of their own ideas, are the most solicitous about their children being taught to read at the earliest possible period of capability. Such parents seem

to have overlooked the fact, that there is very little exercise of the mind in simply learning to read ; though the demands which are thus made upon attention, patience, and memory, are a little too exorbitant, and certainly such as never can repay either the teacher or the taught, by an amount of success at all proportioned to the labor and the pain of their endeavors.

But why, when the mother has such exquisite materials to work with, as the love and the confidence of her child, with its quick sensibility to enjoyment—why does she not begin to work with these materials, so as to introduce ideas at once to its mind, and then to affix to such ideas their appropriate signs ? By teaching the signs of ideas first, we reverse the order of nature, and convert into a task of painful and herculean toil, that which might be rendered by the mother a source of perpetual interest and enjoyment.

The memory, too, may be easily impressed by those who carefully watch the best opportunity of conveying instruction to the young ; because whatever we can be made feelingly to comprehend, we distinctly remember ; and thus the mother, through the medium of her own sympathies, and the affections of her child, enjoys an advantage over all other preceptors. Whatever also strikes the senses in a forcible manner, makes a vivid impression upon the mind, so as to be long remembered. From this principle the method of teaching as at present pursued in infant schools, derives its power and efficacy ; and from the same principle it is, that home-education possesses in many respects so decided a superiority over that of schools.

Let us for a moment imagine the case of a mother and her child, gazing, for the first time in the experience of the latter, upon the phenomena of a thunder-storm. The child feels no alarm as the brilliant flashes of lightning follow each other in quick succession, because it is accustomed to think that safety dwells beside its mother. It therefore watches them with astonishment and delight ; and during the intervals, the mother teaches it, that the vivid and sudden light which illu-

minates both heaven and earth at the same instant, is called a *flash of lightning*.

Now compare this method of instruction with that which is most frequently adopted ; and imagine a little child poring over a spelling-book, spreading its rosy hand upon the page, and with contracted brow, and anxious eye, alternately attempting to spell a disconnected mass of words off the book, and then peeping again at the unintelligible and elaborate meaning given to each short word, as if to render it less comprehensible than when it stood alone. Perhaps the word is *flash*, the meaning of which is painfully hammered out, or probably explained by the teacher, where the child is too young to “learn meanings.” But what impression is such explanation likely to make in this instance, when the poor little sufferer, with its strained attention, has next to be questioned in *flat*, *flask*, and some dozen other words, each as different from the last in meaning and association as it is possible to be.

It is as little likely that the child in the latter instance should remember the signification and use of the word *flash*, as it is that it should forget it in the former, while associated with that wonderful evening, when it stood protected by its mother’s arms, and looked out upon the world, all darkness and gloom at one moment, all brilliance and light the next. I say nothing here of the more expansive and complex idea of a thunder-storm being introduced to the mind of the child, because I have supposed it too young for such an extent of intelligence ; but the same principle, I am persuaded, would hold good throughout, and save a world of trouble to those who should afterwards undertake the education of children prepared in this manner for being sent to school. Indeed, it is impossible to say to what important, or what trifling matters, all coming under the cognizance of the mother, this principle may not be applied. I knew a little boy, very dull at his letters, yet very quick to make observations upon cause and effect, who, long before he could speak plainly, walked one day beside his mother in perfect silence, looking earnestly

at her feet. At last he said, in his broken language, "One foot goes, while tudder foot stops." Here then was an opportunity for the mother to give her boy a lesson of far more value than many pages in a book of spelling, or of reading made easy. She might, and she possibly did, set him to raise his weight from the ground by lifting both feet at once; and at the same time she might explain to him in a manner which he never would forget, the meaning and application of the words *step, walk, run, jump*, with many others, which he would have been months in learning as a common lesson.

To the observation of the boy upon his mother's feet, that one stopped while the other went on, a nurse-maid would in all probability have replied—"To be sure it does: what a silly boy you are!" and here would have been an end of the matter. The general incapacity of servants to convey useful information with regard to common things, makes it sometimes a subject of astonishment, that mothers should so seldom walk out with their children; because it is chiefly in their walks that their attention is struck by new objects, and their curiosity in consequence awakened. Even where the attendance of a governess is substituted for that of a nurse, the case is not always much better; because none but a mother can love a child well enough to be always teaching it. The governess, of course, will have stipulated that when school-hours are over, she shall have nothing more to do in the way of instruction: and even if it be agreed upon, that she shall walk out with the children, who shall assert a right to deprive her of almost the only luxury permitted to a governess—the luxury of her own thoughts? Thus, while the child is asking whether the same butterflies will come again next spring, she is probably thinking of a letter she has received that morning, telling her that the vessel in which her brother sailed has been lost at sea.

Above all other means of instruction, that of easy and familiar conversation is the most effectual in the general tone it gives to the

habits of thinking, observing, and communicating ideas in a family; and who is so capable of using this means as a mother? Who but a mother can love her children well enough to be always ready and willing to convert every incident that may occur in the nursery, or around the household hearth, into a medium for the enlargement of the sphere of thought, the correction of error, or the establishment of truth? It is a subject worthy of being taken into consideration, that childhood, unlike mature age, is possessed with an almost untiring relish for the repetition of the same facts which have afforded interest again and again; and thus a favorite old story is often called for by the listening group, in preference to any thing new. We should wonder at this peculiarity in childhood, if we were not accustomed to see in all, even the most minute among the laws of nature, a beneficent design, by which preparation is made for a future state of being; and here, in the demand of the child for a narrative which has often been repeated, we recognize a provision for impressing the plastic nature of its mind and feelings, with facts which shall never be effaced. But who, I would ask again, except a mother, can bear to answer these demands? Who else will relate a story for the hundredth time as freshly as when first it was told? Who else will patiently sit by the bedside of the child, repeating its favorite hymns? Who else will awake in the silent hours of the night, to converse about the unseen Being who protects the world, and keeps watch over the little infant on its couch of rest?

It is a commonly acknowledged fact, that half the fears of grown-up people, and far more than half the fears of children, arise from their ignorance. Well-educated women, or at least such as are popularly called so, are often found in this respect too closely to resemble children; for their ignorance of machinery, of the habits of animals, and of natural philosophy in general, subjects them to innumerable misapprehensions, of which, it is humbling to observe, they are sometimes rather proud than ashamed. With children

the case is very different, because it is no fault of theirs that they do not understand what they have never had an opportunity of hearing explained. In their walks with the nurse-maid, they have probably been severely chidden when they have exhibited symptoms of fear, and told that the cow only ran after naughty boys and girls; or that the roaring steam-engine which terrified them so much, was a very good engine, because it carried people to London to see the pretty sights. Beyond such explanations as these, the intelligence of the nurse too seldom extends. Besides which, we must not fail to observe, that in these and similar instances, the sensation of fear has taken possession of the child before the explanation, such as it is, can take effect; and thus the impression of danger remains to be stronger in its memory than its subsequent impression of the justice of the cow, or the benevolence of the steam-engine.

What I am particularly anxious to urge upon the attention of mothers, is the importance of making just impressions first; and I am persuaded that by the means of easy, and, at the same time, instructive conversation, this may to a great extent be done, so that when the object which would otherwise have been one of terror, does present itself, the child may be prepared to receive it under more favorable impressions than those of fear; and even where, as must necessarily be the case, the object is such as it has never heard of before, the child who has been in the habit of receiving well-timed and judicious information from its mother, will be preserved from a variety of painful apprehensions, by a general impression that every thing in nature and art has its particular use; and that even the most powerful agents of which it can form a notion, are not put in action by any malignity of their own, but are overruled for some good purpose, and often made conducive to the greatest benefit to man.

The feeling of trust and confidence which such a mode of instruction is calculated to inspire, belongs more to a subsequent chapter than to this. Yet, as our trust in general

is intimately connected with our impressions of truth, it is necessary to observe, that it is chiefly upon its confidence in the combined wisdom and sincerity of its mother, that the child depends for security, in spite often of the effect produced by external objects upon its senses; and that it is the character of the mother, taken as a whole, to which it mentally refers when surprised into an apprehension of danger from a cause which it cannot understand. A calm and self-possessed mother, welcoming cheerfully the common incidents of life, has much in her power in the way of preserving her children from needless fears; and if, in addition to this self-possession, she adds the resources of a well-stored mind, opportunities will never be wanting for teaching them *why* they have no cause to be afraid.

Although a comparison is generally allowed betwixt painting and music, as sources of gratification adapted to a high degree of taste and feeling, yet, in their actual utility, they bear but little relation to each other. An inferior performance on the harp, or, the piano, is scarcely in the present day admitted among the amusements of the drawing-room. Neither, it may be said, is an inferior performance in the way of drawing.—It is not much to the purpose to surmise what a dismantling of albums there would be, if this were really the case. My business is chiefly to show that there may be great utility in a kind of drawing, which is little calculated to excite the admiration of an evening party; and it would be an unspeakable advantage to all mothers, in conveying lively and correct ideas to the minds of their children, if they were themselves proficient in the art of sketching from nature.

Indeed I am one of those who would be glad to see drawing taught to all, though upon a very different plan from that which seems at present to be most approved. It is not the fault of those who teach, that all children whose parents pay for drawing-lessons, take home a certain number of pieces of polished pasteboard, on which are depicted, perhaps, a gothic arch marked out by the master, a

bridge beside which he has planted a tree, a cottage thatched by his hand, or a scarecrow Magdalene with a round tear coming out of each eye. The production of such specimens, however much they may be admired by the near relations of the pupil, are far from being illustrations of what I mean by the art of drawing.

The art of drawing should be understood to mean the art of making just and true delineations of objects as they are; and this might be taught, in the first place, by beginning at once to reduce the simplest objects to the size wanted on the pupil's slate or paper. By commencing at once with the process of reduction, it will ever afterwards be comparatively easy, and not present, as it now does, almost insuperable obstacles to the art of sketching from nature—the only end really worth attaining in learning to draw or paint.

But where, it may be asked, if the pupils spend their time in drawing nothing better than boxes, books, or the outlines of simple figures delineated for them on a giant scale—where will be those wonderful *results* which the fashion of the day demands? The results of such a process would certainly not consist in what could be brought forward at any time to obtain its reward of praise, they would not in reality consist of any thing which could be regarded as property duly paid for at the marketable price. The results to which my ambition for the rising generation points, would consist in habits of observation, clear perceptions of form and outline, so as to have the fac-simile of every well-known object impressed without confusion upon the mind; in quickness of imitation, and facility of touch in delineating all visible objects, so as to represent them truly to others; in a capability on the part of men for giving clear directions to workmen, illustrating such directions by outlines at once correct and bold, as well as in uniting utility with taste; and on the part of women, for copying and designing patterns, marking out with clearness different lines of beauty; but, above all, and here the subject assumes its most important character, for sketching with promptness and precision

all specimens in natural history, as well as almost every other branch of juvenile study, so as at once to strike the eye, and impress the memory of youth—to amuse the fancy, and improve the understanding at the same time.

We all know that even the rudest drawing of a rat, a mouse, or a donkey, with accompanying lively descriptions of some of their peculiar habits, has power to fascinate a group of children on a winter's evening, almost beyond any other resource; and if with greater ease the mother could make these designs at once more spirited, and exactly true to life; if also she could add an illustration of some favorite anecdote, by placing different figures together, or allowing the children to choose how they shall be placed, she would find herself in possession of a means of instruction, almost as refreshing to herself, as delightful and invigorating to the young minds whose education is committed to her care.

Were this a more general amusement in private families, I believe we should much less frequently hear the impatient exclamation—"There! take that, and be quiet." "Now, James and Lucy—quarrelling again!" "John, you naughty boy, let Maria play with your puzzle." "Do tell me what o'clock it is, for I am distracted with your noise." But mothers tell us on every hand, that they do adopt this admirable expedient for getting through a long evening, or a rainy day, by allowing their children to *paint*; and that they find it answer their purpose to admiration. The purpose of keeping the children quiet, and saving trouble to the mother, unquestionably it may answer; and if the art of drawing be considered, as it too frequently is, a matter of no sort of moment, then the amusement of painting pictures already made, is agreeable and satisfactory enough. If, however, it is considered at all a desirable thing either for men or women, that they should be able to draw with accuracy and ease, no more effectual means of preventing this could possibly be adopted, than that of allowing children to fill up drawings with color,

before they know any thing of outline or form. It is allowing the child to jump at once to an obvious result, and at the same time suffering him to be deceived as to the value of his work ; because he will learn in a very few years, that such a result is utterly worthless ; yet having attained his end, such as it was, he will not then be likely, under such a disappointment, to go back to the means of obtaining a better. He will in reality find out that he has been cheating himself under the sanction of his parents, and thus the moral effect upon his character will be any thing but good.

After all, however, I am not sure but that upon the principle of rewards being given in kind, a young designer, after he has tried his best at outline, may not now and then be allowed to paint ; but his red houses and green smoke, blue men and yellow women, should always be treated with a certain degree of disrespect, and by no means should they be allowed the same amount of credit, as if he had accomplished a drawing of his own, however rude and unattractive to the mere observer.

It seems rather hard upon mothers who have never acquired the art of drawing, even in the humblest manner, to urge this point so strongly ; and there are probably few who have not, on reading the valuable remarks on this subject contained in "Home Education," felt painfully their own incapacity for carrying out the admirable system there laid down ; but if, because this generation is peculiarly defective in one branch of learning, the next must inevitably remain so too, we are indeed in a hopeless condition ; and I write at the greater length on this subject, because I believe, that most persons who never draw, are under great misapprehensions as to the talent or faculty required to enable them to do so. Hence they complain that they have no taste, which generally means that they have no inclination, for drawing ; and this no doubt arises from their not being convinced of its extensive utility ; nor, in the case of women, of the boundless resources it will place within their reach, if ever they should have children to amuse and

instruct. Others again complain of their want of talent, which arises from their never having been taught in the right manner ; for as all persons can be taught to write, that is, with greater or less facility, so there is no doubt but all persons could be taught to draw simple, distinct, and familiar objects, if they were not, by the process of instruction, pushed on too rapidly to obvious and immediate results. Perfection in the art either of drawing or painting, so as to design with taste, and execute with effect, is a totally different matter—an art belonging unquestionably to the distinguished few, and the practice of which would in most cases be obviously at variance with the duties of a mother.

In conducting the affairs of the nursery, it is of essential importance to understand that the minds of children must always be at work. As it is necessary to the bodily health of an infant that it should always be in motion except when asleep, and as nature has provided for this requirement by a perpetual restlessness, often complained of by those who are unacquainted with its relative advantages ; so the mind is perpetually using, in some way or other, the different faculties with which it is endowed ; and the part of the mother is to teach it how to use them with the greatest facility, and to the best effect. The toys provided for children in the present day, are generally of so highly-finished and complete a kind, that after the first emotions of surprise and delight have subsided, they fail to afford any further enjoyment ; and as there is nothing more to be done towards completing their construction, there only remains one alternative, that of pulling them in pieces. The rudest machine, or the meanest implement of their own construction, has often the power to please for a much longer time, because it continues to be capable of improvement, and is not in itself of such a character as to be removed beyond their hopes of success. Upon the same principle, all playthings which they can use, are infinitely preferable to such as they can only admire ; because the faculty of admiration is one, the culture of which belongs only to

riper years. Yet care should be taken even in presenting a boy with a book, a barrow, or any other article which has a distinct use, that he is of an age to turn it to some account, otherwise he will bewilder, disappoint, and irritate himself, with unavailing attempts to use his newly-acquired treasures as he sees them used by others.

In all manual exercises, as well as in all operations of the mind, we cannot keep too constantly in view the benefit, to themselves and to society, of individuals having what is familiarly called, "their wits about them," or, in other words, being always ready for the occasion, whatever it may be. How much of happiness, as well as of general usefulness, is associated with this habit, it would be impossible to say. Perhaps we can only estimate its real value, when connected in our practical duties, with that dreamy, absorbed, and profitless existence, which tends neither to individual nor social benefit. The prompt, the ready, the active, those who are never at a loss, and especially those who are never lost in self—those who abound in resources, and those who know how to use all common means, who never hesitate longer than is necessary to decide, and then act immediately upon their own decisions; it is such persons, taken as a class—and a happy and enviable class they are—who constitute the most valuable portion of the human family; and, admire as we may, the brilliant though fitful exhibitions of extraordinary talent—reverence as we may, the sibyl silence of genius waiting for inspiration—it is to persons who have early learned to use their own minds at any time, and on any subject, that we fly with our perplexities and difficulties, secure that assistance is most likely to be found with them.

Wherever there are symptoms of dawning genius in a child, or of extraordinary talent of any kind, instead of anticipating too hastily the result of such natural endowments, and urging forward the cultivation of that peculiar faculty which appears to be predominant, the mother ought to watch carefully in order to ascertain whether there may not be

a deficiency in some other mental qualification, proportioned to this excess.

If there be real genius, it will be sure to develop itself in due time, under reasonable treatment; and long before the child who possesses extraordinary talent arrives at the proper age for turning such talents to the best account, he will have felt abundant need of clear perceptions, sound judgment, and all which is usually comprehended under the name of common sense. In order to pass with safety along the stream of life, under that lofty sail which genius delights to spread, he will have abundant need of all the ballast which a strictly rational education can supply. If, in addition to this, the character has been formed upon well-grounded religious principles, genius to such a child is capable of being a real blessing; but, on the other hand, we must not forget, that without such accompaniments, it is equally capable of being a real curse. To educate a child to be a genius, is perhaps the greatest absurdity a parent can commit; but to educate a child to be active, useful, conversant in common things, willing to assist others, and able to adapt itself to circumstances wherever it may be placed, is to furnish it with the means of turning extraordinary talent to the best account.

Both this kind of talent, and genius, may then be safely left to the cultivation of after years. The mother has little to do with them, except to see that they are neither too much stimulated, nor too much repressed; for it is possible that genius may be crushed, and the effect of such treatment would, in all probability, be the same upon the human character, as that of lopping off the leading branch upon a young tree. Other branches might shoot forth, and all the vigor of healthy vegetation might be displayed, but nothing could restore the beauty of the tree as a whole, in its original bold and upward growth.

It is scarcely necessary, however, to warn the mother against this mode of treatment. Her own partial admiration of her child, her own ambition pointing to its future course, will be sufficient to protect its genius from a

system of depression emanating from her ; and the mere fact of her natural feelings being so warmly engaged on this side of the question, renders it the more necessary to urge upon her attention, that apparently more humble part of maternal duty, which consists in adding to her children's store of ideas, in taking care that the impressions they receive are just and true, and in teaching them how to use, with the greatest facility, the faculties of their own minds.

Did not the habit of looking for immediate and obvious results, withdraw our attention from the good of mankind in general, and confine it too much to little points, in which our self-interest is concerned, we should more constantly bear in mind, that it is not the extent of genius or talent in a few individuals which makes a nation powerful, great, or prosperous ; but rather the industrious, rational, and enlightened character of the population at large. It is, in fact, *the people* upon whom depends a nation's wealth, its resources, its stability, and its general influence. In order to raise the character of a people, it is necessary that mothers should form a high estimate of the importance of their own efforts in this great and good work. They will then set about the accomplishment of it with earnestness and hope. And why should they not ?—with earnestness, because it is an act of duty fraught with boundless and incalculable benefit to their fellow-creatures—and with hope, because the beneficent Author of our existence, never, in the order of his providence, appoints a task, without bestowing, in some measure, the means by which it may be performed. Thus the mother who feels painfully that she has but little capability for the mental cultivation of her children, may make up for many deficiencies by a willing mind, and by the use of those advantages which naturally belong to her situation as a parent ; and if, possessing the love and the confidence of her children, she can early accustom them to the use of their minds, they will not make the worst citizens of the world, or the less exemplary Christians, for having received their first

ideas, and acquired their earliest habits, under the careful training of an humble-minded mother.

CHAPTER IV.

ELEMENTS OF CHARACTER.

ELEMENTS of character may be said to develop themselves when a child begins for the first time to be actuated by motives distinct from the operation of its senses. Thus, when it has learned to prefer the approbation of its mother, to the gratification of its own appetite, it has exhibited one of those elements of character, which, in all probability, will prove most important in its future life.

That ceaseless activity of body and mind which has already been alluded to, will at this stage of experience become capable of a fixed and definite purpose ; and when the ends which the child endeavors to attain are associated with a sense of good and evil, it will have commenced the existence of a moral agent, and as such will demand the assiduous and unremitting attention of its mother.

Important as it is, that maternal love should be so directed as to teach the use of a mind, yet, after all, this part of a mother's duty bears but a small proportion to that of forming the characters of her children. It is true, they would form themselves, or rather circumstances would form them, without any instrumentality of hers : but how ? Can it be the part of a Christian mother to leave circumstances alone to decide whether her child shall be happy or miserable for all eternity ? No ; that part of education which consists in storing the memory, may possibly be committed with propriety to other hands ; but as a mother's instruction is properly more moral than intellectual, that far more important part of education which consists in forming the habits of children, and thus laying the foundation of character, must belong to the mother.

A mother's superior advantages in the art of communicating ideas has already been described ; and if, in the mere act of imparting knowledge, her qualifications are so admirably adapted to her duties, how much greater must be their value in implanting the first ideas of right and wrong, or rather in the great work of giving impulse and direction to the elements of character, by inspiring a love of the one, and a hatred of the other ! By what means could the mother work upon the mind of her child, so as to impart these ideas, except by that close sympathy which exists between them, by the confidence she has inspired, and the love upon which it implicitly depends ? It is simply by the use of these means, that she is able to direct the love of her child to any thing which she herself regards as lovely, and to render odious in its eyes whatever she despises or dislikes. Here then is power—the greatest which one human being can possibly exercise over another—the power to rule its admiration and its disgust, its love and its abhorrence.

It is true, the mother will often have to oppose the appetites and inclinations of childhood, but it is in her own peculiar capability for doing this, and doing it effectually, that we see the superiority of her qualifications to those of all others ; for no sooner is the child assured of her sympathy, than it trusts all its wishes to her tenderness to forgive, or to her bounty to supply ; no sooner is it convinced of her wisdom, than it evinces a willingness to submit, on the ground of her knowing best what is for its good ; and no sooner does it feel that her love is entirely disinterested, and wholly free from caprice or change, than it yields, under the satisfactory conviction, that its present sacrifice will be more than made up to it in some better way.

With these unquestionable advantages, then, the mother begins to question which of the elements of character displayed by her child, she can turn to good account. That perpetual restlessness for which the poor little busybody has been so often chidden—let us not dismiss that as a crime, without some examination as to what can be made of it. The

idea that children must squander about, and that servants must gather up, prevails almost universally in all families. Thus, when the little lord of the nursery has thrown every thing he had to play with in all possible directions, when he has pulled the chairs out of their proper places, upset the stools, and dragged the floorcloth into heaps, he grows fretful and dissatisfied until his nurse supplies him with some other kind of amusement, or probably until she replaces the furniture, in order that he may have the pleasure of throwing all things into confusion again.

But suppose the same child was taught—not as a punishment, but cheerfully and kindly taught—to put every thing in its proper place again, as a means of restoring order and thus pleasing mamma, and making everybody comfortable ; I believe a wholesome and effectual stimulus to activity might be thus supplied, so as to last perhaps for another hour of amusement, at the same time that a love of order might be inspired, and a still more important desire to be useful and kind. In fact, there are few things more gratifying to children, than a belief that they are useful ; and if they are only taught to esteem it a privilege to make other people happy, the mere act of doing so, will become a happiness to them.

While enforcing the rule of implicit obedience, already recommended, the mother will sometimes be glad to take advantage of such helps as may be at hand ; and in this respect, the regularity of time—even the stroke of the clock which stands in the hall—may be made of essential service. It is an excellent thing to accustom children to be obedient to time—to do, or cease to do, certain things at certain hours ; because as time never varies, there can be no misunderstanding on this point. Habits of punctuality will be thus induced, and a general impression made upon the mind, that there are certain laws by which events are regulated, over which we cannot possibly exercise the least control.

An education of mere rule, however, would be but a very unsatisfactory one. Among the many unlooked-for incidents of human

life, there must be room left for the operation of motive, and the reference of choice from a lesser to a greater good. Thus when children begin to understand and appreciate the reasons why certain rules are broken, it is the part of the mother to allow such deviations as she may consider most conducive to the good of her family, taking care that the rule of obedience to her wishes still remains inviolate.

We will suppose a little group of children learning their morning lessons, to which it is the rule of the house that they shall closely apply until the clock strikes twelve. On one particular morning, however, an aged grandmother arrives about eleven, having walked some distance for the purpose of seeing the children, and having but an hour to stay. Are they then to go on with their lessons until the usual time? Certainly not; because in this case the higher duty of giving pleasure, and showing kindness and respect to an aged relative, supersedes the duty of maintaining a rule. And thus it is, as children advance in years, the mother has to be perpetually choosing for them, not only the good in preference to the evil, but also the greater good in preference to the less.

Among the first convictions impressed upon the mind of a child, should be one of its own helplessness, as well as its own ignorance. The pleasure of being useful is sometimes turned to bad account under the management of nurses, who go the length of persuading children that they cannot put the nursery in order without them, nor lift the toys upon the table without their help, thus inspiring premature, as well as false ideas, of their own importance, than which nothing can be more undesirable. On the other hand, however, an equal degree of care must be exercised, that children are neither blamed, nor unnecessarily put down and humbled, either because of their ignorance or their helplessness. Since it is no greater fault of theirs that they are helpless, than that they are little, they should only be made sensible of this fact so far as to render them willing to receive instruction and assistance, as something which is necessary

to their safety and well-being. In the same way they should be made to understand, that since as little children they enjoy many pleasures in which older persons could not with propriety participate; so there are certain things—particular kinds of food, for instance—which they see every day partaken of by others, but which, on account of their being little children, are not suitable for them.

I am aware that in this instance my opinions differ from those of many generous and kind-hearted mothers, who declare that they could not allow anything at their tables, of which their children might not partake. But my idea is, that we should begin early with children the kind of discipline which they will inevitably find themselves subjected to in after life; and as they will often during illness have to abstain from certain kinds of food; often—nay, almost at every meal, have to set a limit to their indulgence of natural appetite; and often, in the great duty of adapting themselves to circumstances, have, in all probability, to see their own tables supplied very differently from those of their wealthier neighbors; I would begin early with the course of training most likely to render such crosses of inclination so habitual as scarcely to be felt; nor can I see that there is more injustice in denying a great variety of food to a child because it is little, than because it is ill.

To learn our true position in life, and to be satisfied with it, whether in childhood or old age, is one of the most important of human attainments; and if a mere child is allowed to consider itself upon the same general footing as a man or woman of thirty, it will either have to endure being undeceived by some painful and humiliating process, or else it will continue committing acts of egregious folly for the remainder of its life.

Whenever children exhibit that kind of arrogance and self-sufficiency, which can only exist in connection with extreme ignorance, it is best to let them try some of the mighty feats of which they boast, and, without exulting in their disappointment, simply leave them to the consequences of their own presumption.

But in order to bring all children to a right sense of their real capabilities, as well as their true position, they should often be thrown upon their own resources. By having amusement too constantly supplied, they seldom learn to know what it is they really want; and thus will sometimes grow fretful in the midst of a world of toys, just as they become feverish and ill, in consequence of being fed so often, that they have no time to be hungry. One of the most striking characteristics exhibited by children, is the alacrity with which some will seek and provide their own resources; and if their mother wishes that they should grow up industrious, useful, and happy, she will afford them every encouragement in doing this. She will consequently allow them materials for creating their own amusement, rather than finished toys; and whenever they have kept steadily to one object, so as to accomplish a design, however simple, rude, or worthless as a whole, maternal love should seize the opportunity for bestowing a large amount of approbation upon the effort.

Much also may be done by a mother in the way of stimulating a laudable ambition in her children to accomplish certain ends; but she must be especially careful not to go too far, or to encourage their attempting what is impossible to them. It is unspeakably distressing to hear hasty and inconsiderate parents sometimes insisting upon what is impracticable, and going on to declare that their children must and shall do certain things; without taking the trouble to ascertain whether there may not be some insurmountable obstacle in the way. Indeed, notwithstanding all the boasted tenderness called into exercise on behalf of children, there is also a vast amount of cruelty practised upon them, purely from want of thought. And then the absurdities which are proposed to them as reasons for submission! I remember to have been told, night after night, that I must eat all my apple-pie, a thing to which I had a particular aversion, because there were so many poor children who would be glad to have it. Now, how these poor children should be benefited

by my eating what they liked, and I did not, I never could make out; as little could I imagine how it should be a merit in me to eat up all, when they would have been so glad to have a part. She was a good, kind nurse, however, who used to tell me this, and maintained the highest character as a servant. The question is not with such, but whether there may not be mothers who err almost as strangely in their moral training.

Dr. Johnson has told us, that pity is not a natural feeling—that it must be taught to children before they can exercise its soothing power. And certainly it has often appeared to me one of the least attractive features of infancy, that children should evince a mischievous desire for getting one another into scrapes. Not that they delight in seeing the punishment they have brought upon their playmates actually inflicted: the spectacle of suffering appears to shock them, in its absolute reality. But still they run and tell, when there is no occasion to do so, that such an one—perhaps their favorite companion—has been committing an act of delinquency, the disclosure of which they know will bring disgrace and suffering upon the offender.

In the same way, we often see children tormenting animals, even the very pets they consider as their own, and appear at other times to love; not certainly in ignorance that there is torment in what they are doing, but purely, as it would seem, from an inclination to give pain. I am the more disposed to think there is this element in the human character, because I know individuals, kind and benevolent in the general tone of their feelings, who, from never having been taught to pity the sufferings of the animal creation, inflict the most wanton cruelty simply as an amusement.

It becomes then an important part of a mother's duty, to teach her children the loveliness, as well as the utility of pity; for without pity, there would be little done in the world towards relieving individual distress. Pity is the forerunner of help; and whoever cannot pity, is without the mainspring of all human kindness.

I have sometimes thought that by being allowed the care of tame animals, children might be taught to feel both pity and sympathy for this portion of the creation. But then there are so very few animals capable of being made so happy in confinement, as they would be in their natural state, that there appears considerable danger, lest we should by this means be guilty of inflicting misery for the sake of seeing it pitied. There are some, however, such as dogs, rabbits, Guinea-pigs, and some kinds of birds, which, if not confined too closely, and carefully supplied with their favorite food, exhibit every symptom of cheerfulness, and even satisfaction in their lot. Among these, there will unavoidably be deaths and disasters of various kinds, calculated to call forth feelings of pity; and the boy, who in early childhood has really loved his own dog, will be likely to show kindness to all others, for the sake of that long-remembered favorite.

Many important facts in natural history may also, by the same means, be impressed upon the minds of children, so as never to be forgotten in after life; especially that important fact, that in connection with animal life in a healthy state, there is always, to a certain extent, a capability both of enjoyment and suffering. The child learns, too, in the same way, its first moral lesson—that, by the exercise of kindness, the creatures dependent upon its care are made happy; while by neglect or unkindness they are as certainly made miserable.

I cannot then believe, but that it might be a help to mothers in the moral training of their children, to allow them the care of animals; because, without drawing into the scheme of education these lower creatures, it is impossible that a child should stand in the position of a responsible being as regards the welfare of others. If, however, the mother should so far lose sight of the end she ought to have in view, as to permit her child merely to caress its favorites, instead of providing for their support, and making them comfortable in every way; if the gardener is to feed the rabbits, and little miss

and master are to call them their own; or if the housemaid is to put the aviary in order, while they fondle the birds; then, indeed, the dignified sense of being possessors of property had better be done away with altogether, for any good it is likely to effect. Better, a thousand times, to open the cage or the rabbit-house, and let the captives go, than suffer little masters and mistresses to grow up in the belief that they are really kind, when they do nothing towards putting their kind feelings into operation for the good of others. If, too, the mother should be so negligent as to allow creatures thus confined to suffer from neglect, she will, as the instrument of inflicting misery, be little qualified for teaching her children how to pity. The only safe and effectual method of turning this system to good account, is for the mother to inspect, or to depute some one else to watch over the welfare of the animals for their good; while, for the good of her children, she allows them to act as if they were the only responsible agents in the whole matter. All neglect must therefore be chargeable upon them; while the health, happiness, and general prosperity of the establishment, must be attributed, so far as it can be with justice, to their good management.

It is a remarkable fact, that the most amiable mothers sometimes train up the most unamiable children. This, however, will only be found to be the case where the mother is either ignorant or inconsiderate. A woman who is merely amiable, and who has never accustomed herself to think of the moral tendency of certain actions, who only desires that her children should be made happy for the time being, without any idea of their future welfare, will punish and deny herself to almost any extent, for the purpose of procuring them a momentary gratification; and then perhaps she will feel hurt at their want of gratitude and esteem towards herself.

This, as well as other strange anomalies in the characters of what are called *amiable women*, have done much to convince me, that sound principle and common sense, with unquestionably a due proportion of warmth-

edness, are in the long-run more conducive to individual, as well as social happiness, than those ungoverned springs of tenderness and love, which burst forth and exhaust themselves, without calculation or restraint.

A merely amiable woman, who has never submitted her feelings to the government of common sense, will reject the idea of its being a *duty* to make her own comfort and convenience objects of primary consideration amongst her children. She will reject this idea, under the impression that it is too selfish for *her* to act upon. *Her* principle is one of disinterested love, and therefore she never places herself in the way of her children's *gratification*, never requires any thing of them towards her own comfort, allows them to eat all their good things without asking her to partake, and to seize every means of gratification which may fall in their way, without the slightest reference to her. That such children will naturally grow up greedy, selfish, and regardless of their mother, it is scarcely necessary to say. Yet what is to be done where the mother is so amiable, so meek, and so disinterested, that she absolutely cannot consent to make herself an object of consideration?

It would certainly be a very interesting and charming alternative in this difficult case, if, while the sweet mother should purposely shrink into nothing in comparison with her children, the father would draw her merits forth to view, and place her first on every occasion in the attention and regard of his family. Such a picture of domestic life might indeed embellish the pages of a novel; but unfortunately the real world in which we live is so constituted that fathers of families have little time for adorning their wives with honors which they blush to wear. Fathers of families in the present day, and the fact cannot be acknowledged without serious regret, are for the most part too deeply engaged in the pursuit of objects widely differing in their nature from those which belong to the moral discipline of home; and therefore it becomes more the duty of mothers, especially those of the middle class of

society, to look beyond the things of the moment, to consider the almost double responsibility which devolves upon them, and to inquire earnestly into the probable means of ensuring the future good of their children.

It is not, however, so generally from an excess of humility that mothers neglect the opportunity, while their children are young, of inspiring them with a grateful regard for the maternal character, as from a mistaken idea that in the natural relation of a child to its mother, there exists a bond of such inherent power, that circumstances can neither strengthen nor destroy it. They forget that we do not love our relations simply because they are such, and that even the revered name of mother derives its sacred and endearing character from the associations of early life, rather than from any feeling of mere relationship on the part of the child; though it is a great happiness that in after life, and when these associations have been tender and endearing, the idea of relationship gives stability and warmth to our feelings of affection.

Of all the disappointments which assail the peace of mothers, and unquestionably they are many, I believe those which originate in the mistaken notion here alluded to, are by far the most numerous; and if the wounded feeling which in after years so often takes possession of the maternal breast on finding that all the personal sufferings endured, the sacrifices made, and the care bestowed upon the helplessness of childhood, seem to be forgotten as regards the tender and devoted being from whom originated this constant flow of disinterested love—if such feelings could be obviated by the exercise of a little more calculation as to cause and effect in the training of childhood, what a different position the mothers of some families might hold! while, in proportion to the satisfaction of their own minds, would be the increase of their moral influence over their children, extending in all probability to the end of life.

I cannot help again observing here, that there are few things in this world, over which one feels more inclined to lament, than the total waste of good feeling—the utter failure

of the best motives from the want of a little knowledge or a little forethought, as to the surest means of carrying them into effect.—That it is peculiarly the lot of woman to wear herself out in this fruitless expenditure, has been said and sung by many a feeling writer, and by none more sweetly than our own lamented poetess—

“ Her lot is on you—silent tears to weep,
And patient smiles to wear through suffering’s
hour,
And sunless riches from affection’s deep
To pour on broken reeds—a wasted shower ;
And to make idols, and to find them clay,
And to bewail such worship.”

But why is it so ? For no other reason than because woman considers it more beautiful to feel than to think. And so perhaps it is. Yet that she should think sufficiently to make her feelings tell upon the welfare of the beings whose happiness she has so much at heart, is the very point which, in looking upon the world, we long to urge upon women in general, and especially upon mothers.

Among the elements of human character most justly valued in society, and especially in the home circle, are gratitude and generosity. It would seem that the former of these might naturally grow out of the situation of a young child dependent upon others for the supply of every want, and the gratification of every wish. We see, however, that this is far from being the case ; for those very children who are the most unsparingly indulged are generally the most ungrateful. Indeed, how should they be otherwise ? Indulgence does not make them happy ; and we find, throughout the world, that gratitude is not proportioned to the bestowment of favors, but to the benefit we are sensible of deriving from them. It is well, however, to begin by instilling *ideas* of gratitude, if not actual sensations, whenever a child is the subject of kindness from a friend. Children should never be allowed to forget who gave them any of their toys, who took them to see any gratifying sight, or who procured them the means of extraordinary enjoyment in any other way. Above all, the mother

ought not to be so fastidious, so guilty of false delicacy, as to leave herself out of the question in her efforts to inspire gratitude ; for without any assumption of merit above mothers in general, or in fact any thing bordering upon self-praise, she may distinctly set before her children the innumerable benefits they derive from maternal care. She may point to the circumstances of orphans destitute of all such benefits ; and she may even describe occasionally to the older ones, her own sufferings and privations in the discharge of her duty to the younger. This, however, should be done without fretfulness and without murmuring ; for to *complain* to children that they are destructive of their mother’s peace and comfort, is infinitely worse than to leave them in total ignorance that either the one or the other is capable of being disturbed.

It might seem, on a superficial view of the subject, that gratitude was but a little thing to instil into the minds of children, unqualified as they naturally are, to render it productive of practical results, so as in any measure to repay their benefactors ; but here we err, as usual, by looking to immediate consequences, rather than to the future benefit of the rising generation. It is certainly a little thing for a child to bring the first rose it gathers to its mother, because it knows that she is doing something every day, and almost every hour, for its good ; but it is not a little thing, that as children grow up to be men and women, they should treasure in their hearts the sweet remembrance of benefits received, that they should still yearn in after years to pay back again some portion of the debt ; and above all, having early learned their own relative insignificance and helplessness, and their consequent dependence upon the kindness of parents and friends—it is not a little thing that they should throw all these feelings into a higher channel, and refer them to the Giver of every blessing—the Friend in every hour of need.

With regard to feelings of gratitude, perhaps more than any other which claim the general approbation of mankind, selfishness,

pride, and worldly-mindedness too often stand in the way of our seeing their real value. The various imperfections of those of our fellow-creatures from whom we receive benefits, seem also to afford us an excuse for the absence of gratitude towards them; we find too that their kind services are not always such as do us any real good; and thus we go on narrowing the circle of our pleasurable sensations, and hardening our hearts against those genial influences which would make us both happier and better than we are.

By excluding from our minds the feeling of gratitude to our fellow-creatures, it ceases to be habitual; and thus, when we strive to call it forth in our religious exercises, or when contemplating the good providence of God, it is scarcely probable that a sensation so strange to the accustomed tone of our minds should come at the moment it is wanted. It is true that expressions of gratitude abound in all our exercises of prayer and praise, in all our advice, in all our warnings, and in all the consolations we would offer to the suffering or destitute; but is the feeling there? Alas! how often has the Christian to lament that he cannot throw the full force of his warmest emotions into the language he is uttering—that he cannot, from the depths of his own heart, go along with the inspired Psalmist in those outbursts of gratitude, in which the harmony of heaven seems blended with the poetry of earth!

Still there are seasons in the past experience of all who are capable of feeling, when emotions of gratitude have passed over the soul like a fresh torrent over the parched and arid soil, leaving beauty and fertility in its track. To find in the midst of trouble, that some one, of whose kindness we had never dreamed, has been making interest in our favor; that some friend has been secretly working for our good; that a sister or a brother has been making some sacrifice, to serve us; that a father or a mother has been praying for us when we have gone astray; and when one or all of these discoveries have been made, to throw open our hearts

without suspicion and without reserve before our benefactors, so as to let them see and feel our gratitude—surely this does good alike to “him that gives,” as well as to the grateful recipient of such kindness.

It must do good; for there is no sensation approaching so nearly to that which the scheme of man’s salvation is calculated to inspire in the breast of the true believer, as that of intense and fervent gratitude; and, blessed be God, there is no sensation so nearly allied to perfect happiness. Here then is benevolence—here is mercy—here is cause for gratitude on earth and praise in heaven! that the very feeling by which the Christian is most closely bound to the service of his Maker, is that which, throughout all human nature, is the most intimately associated with the purest enjoyment.

That real gratitude—that to which the heart surrenders itself without reserve—is the happiest sensation experienced on earth, we have probably all felt at different times, and in a manner adapted to our own habits and associations—some on entering the house of prayer, some on the recovery of a beloved friend from illness, some on returning home, and some on going forth under favorable auspices; while others have found themselves most overpowered by emotions of gratitude, they scarcely know how, or why. Perhaps in a solitary walk over green fields on a summer’s day, they have paused by a rivulet, to gaze upon half-hidden flowers, and to listen to the hum of the wandering bee, until, startled by a softer note, they have looked up, and seen the woodpigeon sitting in the boughs of a tall tree, through which the sunlight glistened. And then, undisturbed by these sweet natural sounds and sights, a solemn stillness has fallen upon their souls; and while a vision of deep thought has made evident the presence of the Supreme, the Infinite, the Allwise, they have felt themselves remembered—cared for—kept as it were in the hollow of his hand; and thus they have poured forth their gratitude in prayer, such as falls again like dew upon the heart from which it springs.

Oh ! who would exchange such moments for the wealth of worlds !—or who, if by any effort of love, they could be procured for others, would not begin in early childhood to cultivate a soil which is capable of producing so rich a harvest of pure and invigorating joy ?

CHAPTER V.

GENEROSITY AND AFFECTION.

ON the first view of the subjects which are to occupy this chapter, it would almost seem to be a waste of words to commend them to the reader's notice, so uniformly is the opinion of mankind engaged in their favor. A vast amount of praise, however, is sometimes lavished upon *acts* of generosity, without considering what it is we are actually praising.

Children should never be commended for giving what costs them no sacrifice to part with. Where this rule is not observed, we often see a spurious kind of generosity prevailing in families, the members of which grow up with a mistaken notion, that in the mere act of giving, there is a degree of merit upon which they congratulate themselves, when, in reality, they have only been enjoying the highest of all luxuries.

In order to obviate some of the evils arising out of this mistake, children should early be taught to offer a part of their sweetmeats to each other, but especially to their parents ; and what is more, the parents should actually take what is offered—not merely that tiny crumb which the tender mother breaks off, and with disproportioned thanks pretends to eat. This method of commending generosity does a two-fold injury ; in the first place, by deceiving the child into a belief that it is generous, when it is not ; and in the second, by inducing a confidence that it will suffer no loss by the effort it is making. We should be sincere with children in acts, as well as in words. Parents ought therefore not only to take a crumb, but occasionally a good

large portion of what is offered them, so as to produce in the minds of their children a conviction, which will be of infinite service to them in after life, that the true value of all generosity consists in the good it imparts to others, not in the credit it procures for ourselves.

It is not difficult to discover when a false system of pretended giving and pretended taking has been practised in a family, by the blank and disappointed look of the little giver, if a portion unexpectedly large is taken from its hand ; as well as by the trembling and hesitation of that hand, and the fearfulness with which it is drawn back, the next time the ceremony of pretended giving has to be performed towards the individual who happened previously to take too much. Never, it may safely be said, were the elements of a truly generous character unfolded and brought to perfection by such a system as this—a system which, so far as it encourages self-deception, and the substitution of mere pretence for what is real, just, and true, is exactly so much worse than absolute greediness.

If children must be greedy, let them by all means run first into the garden, and devour the ripe fruit before any one else has discovered that it is ripe ; but do not let them come in to offer a small portion of it to mamma, in order to obtain her praises, though all the while feeling perfectly secure against any diminution of their own selfish enjoyment.

There is no need, however, that children should be greedy ; because it is in the power of almost every mother, to teach them that there is a higher enjoyment than that of merely satisfying their own appetites. Suppose, for instance, it should be the established rule in a family that all first fruits should be offered to the parents, and that they should be appropriated entirely, but still thankfully, by them ;—received simply as their due, but still acknowledged with every token of affection. For those self-devoted and uncalculating mothers, to whom allusion has been made, I am aware it would be difficult to do this, or to maintain any rule by

which they would themselves be made first in their children's consideration ; but could they once be made witnesses of that higher, purer joy, which pervades the soul of a young child on having learned that it is " more blessed to give than to receive," they would surely not deny them the cultivation of so lasting a source of real happiness.

On this subject, especially, those kind and unthinking mothers are apt to fall into an endless train of errors, simply from yielding to a natural impulse to produce immediate results of a gratifying nature. Thus the supply of money to children for the purpose of making presents, for which they obtain all the thanks, and all the credit, is practised to a most injurious extent. I do not mean to say that children should never be allowed to give, until they have money or property of their own ; but when they do, it should be in the name of their parents, and on no account should they take merit to themselves as if they had done a generous act.

It is a sacred duty with all who have to do with the moral improvement of their fellow-creatures, to watch over motives, as well as actions ; and as regards the young, to see that they do not grow up deceiving themselves as to what their motives really are. Under no pretence is self-deception more frequently practised, than under that of generosity, as well as general kindness. There may be many selfish motives for doing generous actions, such as reference to our own ultimate benefit in what we do ; but the mistake I would especially point out, refers to our immediate motives, or rather to the direct impulse upon which we act. The direct impulse to act kindly, may be a desire to relieve the suffering of others ; or it may be only a desire to relieve our own sufferings in the contemplation of distress.

Perhaps I shall make my meaning better understood, by the case of a young lady, who believed herself, and was generally believed, to be exceedingly charitable and kind ; and who sometimes returned home on a Saturday afternoon after visiting the poor, so impressed with a painful sense of their wants

and sufferings, that for one there was fruit to be gathered, for another gruel made, while to a third or a fourth, honey and jelly had to be sent out that night. Now if we add, that never, on the Monday morning, or early in the week, when servants were more at liberty, could the same young lady remember to supply the necessities of her afflicted friends, it will be clearly understood that her efforts were simply to relieve the pain of her own feelings in witnessing distress, while so soon as this pain had subsided or lost its acuteness, the sufferings of the poor ceased to supply a motive strong enough for the exercise of her generosity. But let us not think too severely of this case, without asking, in how many instances the conduct of the young lady here described, resembles our own.

I am aware that this subject lies open to the cavillings of those most fruitless reasoners, who, after pursuing a round of arguments, congratulate themselves at last, upon having arrived at the senseless conclusion, that all kindness is selfish, because it originates in an impulse to gratify ourselves by relieving distress, or doing good in some other way. Though such a mode of arguing is scarcely worthy of a moment's serious notice, yet as it sometimes catches the attention of those who do not take the trouble to think for themselves, it may be well to point out a distinction betwixt those kind actions which are really selfish, and those which are not. Those actions, then, may properly be called selfish, which in the mind of the performer have reference only to self ; and those may with great justice be called unselfish, which have reference only to others. Thus the performer of kind or generous actions, whose sole inducement is the luxury expected to be derived therefrom—a luxury consisting either in witnessing enjoyment of his own creating, or in receiving the praise or the gratitude of others ; such a man, though ostensibly a benefactor to his race, might with some propriety be called selfish ; a title which it would be a mockery of language to bestow upon one, who should be so intent upon the relief of suffering, or upon the gratification

of others, as never once to have thought of self, or of any other result than what should belong exclusively to the party served. Though the real enjoyment of such a person would be as high, nay, far higher than that of the other, yet their motives being essentially different, it would be worse than folly to place them in the same rank as moral agents; and whenever we would commend or encourage the generosity of the young, we ought to examine well the true state of the case, in order to ascertain which of these two motives has been in operation.

"If we attempt to teach children," says Miss Edgeworth, "that they can be generous without giving up some of their own pleasures for the sake of other people, we attempt to teach them what is false. If we once make them amends for any sacrifice they have made, we lead them to expect the same remuneration on a future occasion; and then, in fact, they act with a direct view to their own interest, and govern themselves by the calculations of prudence, instead of following the dictates of benevolence. It is true, that if we speak with accuracy, we must admit, that the most benevolent and generous persons act from the hope of receiving pleasure, and their enjoyment is more exquisite than that of the most refined selfishness: in the language of M. de Rochefoucault, we should be therefore forced to acknowledge, that the most benevolent is always the most selfish person. This seeming paradox is answered by observing, that the epithet *selfish* is given to those who prefer pleasures in which other people have no share; we change the meaning of words when we talk of its being selfish to like the pleasures of sympathy and benevolence, because these pleasures cannot be confined solely to the idea of self. When we say that a person pursues his own interest more by being generous than by being covetous, we take into account the general sum of his agreeable feelings, we do not balance prudentially his loss or gain upon particular occasions. The generous man may himself be convinced, that the sum of his happiness is more increased by the feelings

of benevolence, than it could be by the gratification of avarice; but, though his understanding may perceive the demonstration of this moral theorem, though it is the remote principle of his whole conduct, it does not occur to his memory in the form of a prudential aphorism, whenever he is going to do a generous action. It is essential to our ideas of generosity, that no such reasoning should at that moment pass in his mind; we know that the feelings of generosity are associated with a number of enthusiastic ideas; we can sympathize with the virtuous insanity of the man who forgets himself while he thinks of others; we do not so readily sympathize with the cold strength of mind of the person, who, deliberately preferring the *greatest possible share of happiness*, is benevolent by rule and measure."

All making of presents with the parent's money, all giving for the mere luxury of the giver, should then be studiously avoided in the management of children; while, on the other hand, all real kindness, all giving up of selfish gratification purely for the sake of doing good to others, ought to be as studiously encouraged, and rewarded with indubitable marks of approbation.

As one means of preventing young people acquiring a habit of acting from that spurious kind of generosity which has just been described, it is well not to make them too frequent spectators of the sufferings of the poor and destitute, at an age when they are incapable, by their own efforts, of doing any thing towards alleviating the distress they see; for while, with some dispositions, there is danger that their feelings should be rendered callous by the frequency of such spectacles; with others, there is equal danger of acquiring a habit of seeking the relief of the suffering under a pretence of kindness, when the chief or only motive for such kindness is the relief of their own feelings. To accustom children to remember the poor when not present, to lay by for their relief, some portion of the money given for their own use, or to spend a little time now and then in working for their comfort, is a far more likely

method of inspiring sentiments of true kindness, than merely to encourage them to be kind or generous at the time when their feelings are worked upon by the presence of distress.

In making free use of the expressions praise, and blame, I should be sorry to be understood to mean that the approbation, even of a mother, should become the leading motive, in the conduct of a child, beyond that early stage of its existence, when it is incapable of comprehending any other. A mother's approbation, however, may often be made use of as a natural and appropriate reward, and this without any of those direct but disproportioned praises which induce an idea of peculiar merit on the part of a child. Happily for the mother, nature has given her the use of a purer language than that of praise, in which she may hold sweet communion with the soul of her child. It is that of sympathy, which should never be withheld. "It is safer," says Miss Hamilton, "to sympathize with children than to praise them;" and a mother, above all other beings, has perpetually at her command, those innumerable links in the great chain of sympathy, which consist of peculiar tones of voice, caresses, looks, and familiar expressions, down to the minutest touch which thrills along the chords of feeling, and produces an answering echo, true to nature's sweetest music, from the tender and unsophisticated spirit of the child.

We should be careful, too, in the use of maternal approbation, lest children, who have built too much upon this as their reward, should grow up with an inordinate thirst for approbation in general; for though we justly grieve over the situation of a being so isolated and shut out from kindly sympathies, as not to regard the praise or blame of others; yet it is but too evident, from the observation of every day, that no human beings are so often exposed to disappointment, and none in reality so weak, as those who derive their highest satisfaction from the approbation of their fellow-creatures.

Still, in connection with a mother's influence, and with the natural means which are

placed within her power for exercising that influence in the management of her children, it must be allowed that praise and blame are legitimate instruments capable of being used with the most beneficial effect by a judicious woman. For, after all, a system of praise and blame seems to be that which is most adapted to our weakness; in consideration to which, we have been taught by the word of God, to look for consolation and support, less as moral agents to the intrinsic excellence of the Divine law as promulgated in the Scriptures, than simply as little children, to the approbation of our Father who is in heaven.

In confining our ideas of generosity, as is too frequently the case, to the mere act of giving, we take but a very low and partial view of the subject as it affects individual conduct, and as it affects the interests of society in general. We are often made to feel a want of generosity in the behavior of our friends, where there is no giving; and in nothing are we more susceptible of this, than in the treatment of our feelings. There are many friends who will give to us abundantly—there may be some who would share with us their last shilling; but there are not many who will pour the balm of affection into wounds we are justly suffering from disappointed vanity; there are not many who will screen us with tenderness from the exposure of our own folly; and there are still fewer who will rob themselves of a little credit, for the sake of giving us our full share, or more. There are not many either, who can always refrain from reproaching penitence, and triumphing over humiliation, from pursuing a victory with exultation, or from dragging to light the secret sins of a rival. Yet all this belongs to the exercise of true generosity, and is often more touching to the heart a thousand times, than to be the recipient of unnumbered benefits.

To attempt to give any particular direction for the cultivation of this kind of generosity, would be to presume a little beyond the sphere of education; because it must depend so entirely upon the characters of those who have the training of children, and upon the

spirit which is cherished around the domestic hearth. One rule, however, may be safely laid down, and that is, never to use taunting or reproachful expressions to children for offences committed, after such atonement as lies within their power has been made—never to wound beyond what is absolutely necessary for correction, nor to allow the guilty to be put down and degraded more than is essential to their future good. To this may be added, a strict embargo laid upon the exchange of all low thoughts or vulgar sentiments, in the nursery; such as personal remarks upon other people's children, made to please the mother by bringing them into disadvantageous comparison with her own; observations upon dress, and manners, furniture, carriages, and equipments, calculated to inspire in the minds of children false ideas of the value of wealth, and consequently a false estimate of individual character. All these, though they may on the first view of the subject seem to have little to do with generosity, are parts of a whole—elements of that domestic atmosphere which childhood cannot breathe without more or less expansion of soul; and it is scarcely necessary to say, that the low style of thought and conversation here alluded to, is one of the last ingredients we should look for in the formation of a truly generous character.

In connection with this subject, we must not forget to observe, that there is a grudging way of doing kindnesses, even to children, which must have an injurious effect as regards generosity of feeling. Some parents, too, will not make them any just allowance of money, even when they are of an age to understand its value, but on every application for necessary expenses, will grumble as much as if they were actually robbed; while others, or most probably the same individuals, will, in making presents to their children, dwell so much upon the cost, the trouble, and the inconvenience incurred, as to throw over the receivers of such gifts an air of meanness, for being willing to accept, as a means of selfish gratification, what has been purchased so dearly by another.

Whatever is given, then, should be given freely, in order that it may be freely received; for as regards the moral training of children, it is better a thousand times to let them see and feel the difference betwixt grudging and generosity, than to mix up the two ideas in their minds, by accustoming them to be the subjects of generous actions, performed in a grudging spirit.

It is a safe plan, too, for parents never to make any direct reference to desert, in conferring gifts or benefits upon their children; because, independently of real merit being so difficult to decide upon, owing to the immense variety of circumstance and disposition which has to be taken into account, it is a false foundation for any human being to build upon, beyond stipulated remuneration for actual service done. It is justice, if we knew how to exercise it, which bears immediately upon real merit; while generosity refers rather to what we need, than to what we are. If I might be allowed such an illustration of the subject, I should say, that by justice we all, as transgressors, stand condemned in the sight of God; while by generosity we are made partakers of the hope of salvation. And shall we not seek to exercise towards each other, and to inculcate into the minds whose training is committed to our care, a principle of action so peculiarly adapted to our situation, both as regards this life, and the life which is to come? To be acquitted of all blame, is much; but to be forgiven where there is blame, is infinitely more, to creatures frail, erring, and dependent, such as we are. This is the benefit we derive from the exercise of generosity; and which of us in our earthly relations, even the tenderest and closest which it is possible to form, does not feel that forgiveness is all we dare to ask? while, in relation to our Heavenly Father, it is infinitely more than we deserve!

True generosity of feeling is the noblest characteristic by which any human being can be distinguished. We all acknowledge this, but do we all cherish the feeling by every means within our power? If, as regards ourselves, we feel acquitted of all mean, self-

ish, or sinister motives in what we say or do, let us be the more careful, that nothing in our conversation or conduct shall be found to damp the free spirit of generosity in the young characters around us. Let us endeavor to rise above those little envyings, and jealousies, which so often beset with thorns the path of woman; and when tempted to imbecility our kind services by a grudging or reproachful manner, let us remember that beautiful description of the Supreme Dispenser of all benefits, where he is spoken of as "*Him, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraiddeth not.*"

As generosity then has no direct reference to the merit of the object upon which it is bestowed, so neither has the affection of a parent, or indeed any true affection; for though it is impossible to love what is repulsive to us, and consequently opposed alike to nature and to reason that the good should attach themselves to the bad; yet that our affections are but little proportioned to the merit of the objects upon whom they are fixed, the evidence of every day sufficiently proves. And happy indeed is it for some of us, that we can be loved even as we are. Happy is it, especially, for the plain, the dull, the froward child, that, as one of the most unfortunate of mothers has beautifully said—"the loved are lovely." Happy is it, indeed, that a provision has been made in the parent's affection, against all personal defects; so that the very fact of being less attractive to others, sometimes seems to endear the little uncomplaining subject of neglect, so as to bring it home with a welcome of tenfold tenderness, whenever it seeks the shelter of the maternal bosom.

There is not, in fact, among the deep mysteries of our being, one circumstance more illustrative of Divine goodness than this—that the mother, whose quick eye is ever open to perceive the beauty of her child, whose vanity is ever ready to hail the applause it may meet with from others, and whose ambition is ever building the most exalted schemes upon its future course, should see that beauty wanting, and yet feel

no repulse; should watch for that applause, but find it not; and instead of the proud hopes so fondly cherished, should behold a low, obscure, and humble path marked out for the beloved one—that the mother should be able to bear all this, and yet experience an increase rather than a diminution of her tenderness, might indeed supply us with convincing proof, had such been needed, that the humblest and most insignificant being in the universe is provided for by a merciful and gracious Father, as kindly as the most exalted.

The mother must not forget, however, that even in the outpouring of her own affection, there may be something which operates against that of her children's affection in return. There may be a want of sympathy, a want of generosity, or a want of adaptation to their peculiarities of character, which sets them in some measure apart from intimacy with her, and consequently makes her to some extent a stranger to their feelings. To be separated in this manner from a father, is an evil great enough; but for children not to make a bosom friend of their mother, is a calamity of such magnitude as to demand the most careful examination as regards its cause.

Perhaps the warm gush of the child's affection has not been met by equal warmth in return. Perhaps the germs of feeling, as they unfolded themselves in infant beauty, have been withered by sarcasm, or blighted by contempt. Perhaps the mother has never thought how important it is, that children should be encouraged to speak freely what they think and feel, in order that their erroneous notions may be corrected. Or, perhaps, the peal of laughter allowed to echo round the social board whenever a mistake has been committed, has closed the expanding heart, and left it in a manner companionless and unknown. Now, it is the mother who ought to stand by her children in all these little instances of individual exposure; and it is the office of affection not only to make reparation where injury has been done, but so to shield from danger and from pain, as to inspire a feeling

of trust and safety under the protection of maternal love.

And the father too—how beautiful it is sometimes to see his stronger powers of protection brought into action, to defend the little helpless one from heedlessly inflicted pain ! How beautiful it is to see—and happy is it for families where this can be done with safety—the reference of the mother to his authority, as the highest and the best, on all disputed points ; with the treasuring up for him those select and appropriate enjoyments which are most adapted to the situation of a weary man coming home to his well-earned reward—the enjoyment of his own fireside ! How pleasant then to tell over the little incidents of the day—little to all the world, but great to them—how happy to watch the expression of the father's face, as he listens sometimes with grave attention, or approves with cordial smiles ; while he strokes the head of one, as another climbs his knee, and thus dispenses the familiar tokens of his affection, so that none can feel either slighted or forgotten !

But these are among the sunny spots of life, which it is not permitted that either tongue or pen should describe. As the glow of the winter's hearth, all bright and cheering as it is, has an influence more felt than seen ; so there is a life-giving warmth to those who form the charmed circle, in these simple but yet touching scenes, of which nothing in after life can destroy the vitality, and still less efface the remembrance. It is from such fountains as these, gushing forth in the secret of domestic life, that those streams of affection are supplied, from which we have to draw, in our intercourse with society, and with the world. There will be much in this intercourse calculated to divert the streams from their true course, to diminish or retard their healthy flow ; but let us ask the Divine blessing upon our efforts to keep the fountain fresh and pure, for without that they can neither give beauty nor fertility to the path of life.

I have sometimes thought that those simple sunny spots of human life I have here allud-

ed to, were like the green knolls in a lovely landscape, left out by the painter as insignificant in comparison with the rocky heights, the falling torrents, and the precipitous ravines ; yet chosen by the husbandman, and cultivated with peculiar care, because they alone are capable of yielding the harvest upon which his happiness depends. It is thus with what is great and wonderful in the picture of human life, upon which we sometimes gaze with an ill-directed ambition to tread its dizzy heights, or penetrate its mysterious depths, forgetful of the danger and the weariness inevitably attending such an adventurous career. Nor is it sometimes until experience has taught us, that the heights above are cold and barren, and the depths beset with perils profitless and dreary, that we come back perhaps too late, when the autumn tints are upon the landscape, to seek again for the green knolls, and to wish we had been contented with the freshness, the verdure, and fertility, which might still have smiled around us there.

It is an ungrateful part of the duty of those who write upon the moral tendency of human actions, and who consequently presume to examine motives, to cry beware ! when others see no danger, and thus to bring upon themselves the odium of being cynical and gloomy in their general views of human life ; when in reality their love of what is estimable in human character is too intense to permit them to rest satisfied under the apprehension of its being obscured by some advancing cloud. More especially is this the case when childhood with its fresh uncalculating energies becomes the subject of consideration—when we sit down to make cool comments upon its outbursts of ungoverned feeling, and its thrilling voice of joy which echoes upon the weary ear like the summer song of birds, startling the tired spirit into hope that some new spring of gladness has been found, when it is but nature at her joyous revelry, making pastime of common and familiar things, and exulting in the fulness of her own delight.

With this ringing shout of joy, the father of a family is sometimes welcomed home.

when, "Let me be first," is the undisguised and general wish ;—"Let me be first to meet him at the door," "Let me be first to claim his promised kiss." The father and the mother too partake in their full measure of the general exultation, and the strife of little arms to meet a parent's fond embrace, sends warmth and gladness to his heart. But—and here lies the ungraciousness of those who cry beware ! at such a time—there is sometimes hidden a dark secret in that very language, "Let me be first." Yes, looking on the shaded side of this sweet picture, we behold, not always, certainly, but far too often, strife, envy, and passion, among the little anxious group, because they cannot all be first ; and we find then that to be distinguished from the many, to enjoy what could not be enjoyed by others, and to obtain the credit of being the most eager and affectionate, has had more than due share in the motives of some, if not of all.

The parents, however, are too tender, too grateful, and too full of joy, to note this down at such a moment ; and they forget, or persuade themselves that such a blot upon their pleasant picture has never found a place ; until the evil grows, and grows, and then they find, to their surprise, that the brothers and the sisters of their family are not united in their interests, nor so zealous for each other's, as for their own individual good.

The fact is, that while affection arises imperceptibly, and as a natural consequence of their care and kindness, in the hearts of children towards their parents, it does not, unless cultivated by the parents, arise in the same manner, or with equal certainty, in the heart of one child towards another. It is true they are talked into a kind of nursery affection for what is called "the baby," while it is such ; and they may also be taught to say "dear," and speak sweetly to each other—*sometimes* ; but the greedy grasp, the scowling brow, the sly pretence to obtain advantage, and the pleasure secretly enjoyed, too plainly indicate, in some families, that the fruits of true affection need not be looked for there.

Now, in proportion as mothers sincerely desire the future welfare of their children, as they believe that in union there is strength, and in family concord real happiness, surely they will endeavor to turn the springs of early affection into such a channel, as that the fair garden over which they watch with such untiring solicitude, may still be watered, even if the mother's care should be withdrawn.

Beyond a certain period, it is scarcely to be expected that the bond between a parent and a child should be kept unbroken. In the common course of human affairs families are separated, and parents removed by death ; but so long as brothers and sisters live, they might, if bound by true affection, remain to be a blessing and a help to each other ; and should their parents be spared to them beyond the usual period of family union, what richer harvest could they reap, what more entire fulfilment of their hopes, what reward more precious for "all their sorrows, all their cares," than to see their children happy in them, and in each other ! so living in harmony and love on earth, as to sustain the hope of their again becoming a united family in heaven !

All this, however, and it is not too much for maternal love with the Divine blessing to accomplish, is chiefly to be learned in early life, and at home, where that great lesson should be studiously taught, that individual gratification ought never to be sought in opposition to general good. This is the grand secret of social happiness ; and we should begin well, by making it an habitual lesson at home, in order that it may be carried out into all the relations formed in after life.

It is a part of the mother's duty, then, and one to which especial attention should be paid, to see that a spirit of exclusiveness does not find place among her children ; and this can only be done effectually by inspiring them with comprehensive, generous, and affectionate feelings towards each other, so that no single member of the family shall esteem any happiness as complete, in which the others do not partake.

Human nature is deeply charged with selfishness. There is no complaint more frequently made than that of selfishness being the ruling motive with mankind in general. But granting this to be true, I believe much of the evil is chargeable upon the carelessness of mothers in the early training of their children; for sure I am, that no one ever yet was made to experience the value of disinterested kindness, who did not find in its exercise, a higher, purer happiness, than in the mere gratification of selfish inclination. If, then, a family of children are so trained by their mother, as to seek their truest enjoyment in making each other happy, they will not be likely, after having tasted this purer satisfaction, ever to descend again to those lower aims which centre all in self as the supreme object of regard.

One great means of promoting this union of interest in a family, is for the mother frequently to point out to her children the manner in which they may oppose, or carry forward, little plans for the general good. The fireside circle should not be considered well arranged, when only one or two are made comfortable; but when *all* are brought within the influence of light, and warmth, and social feeling. The winter's evening story should not be told until *all* the listeners are gathered in. The walk to the pleasant wood should not be taken, when it is not possible for *all* to go. And when such objections are habitually brought forward by the mother, and the absent ones are remembered as being worthy of having a treat put off on their account; when children, too, are often reminded how incomplete their pleasures must be if enjoyed alone, they naturally imbibe the social feeling of their mother, and in time assimilate so much to the tone of her mind, that they would be both ashamed and grieved to be found wanting in affection towards a sister or a brother.

When illness falls upon one member of a family, we often see the fond mother devoting herself to the duties of the sick-room with unremitting assiduity, while her healthy careless children run off to their accustomed play,

more pleased than sorry to have a greater share of liberty than usual, let the cause be what it may. I would not be supposed to mean, in what I am about to say, that such children could with any propriety be converted into nurses; more especially as it often happens that the atmosphere of a sick-room is such as they cannot breathe with safety. But still there are many cases in which the invalid is in a state to receive occasionally the kind attentions of the younger members of the family; and where this is the case, much may be done to alleviate the trials of indisposition, by making it a favor and a privilege to wait upon the sick or helpless one.

Among the many pitiful spectacles we are accustomed to behold, I have often thought that of a lame boy, watching his happier schoolfellows start off in the merry race from the little mound of earth where he has propped his crutches, is one of the most affecting which the aspect of ordinary life presents; and the situation of the sick child is often too much like that of the lame boy; for though the mother stays beside it, all the rest are gone; they are gone with their thoughtless laughter, bounding over the green lawn; and well the little sufferer knows how they are enjoying life, and enjoying it not the less because it is not with them.

It is a common thing with nurses, and with mothers too, to endeavor to console the invalid by telling of the many choice and excellent things prepared to gratify its appetite, of which the others are not permitted to partake; of the ripe fruit which has been sent as a present for it, and it alone; or of the treat which is in store for the first day of convalescence, by which it will be distinguished as an object of envy to the rest. All this is practised again and again in the nursery and the sick-room; and then, as the child grows better, it is found fault with for being selfish and greedy, as if selfishness was not a natural and necessary consequence of such a mode of treatment.

How much better would it be, to make the season of sickness a time for drawing the

bonds of family affection closer, for directing every thought and every expression of kindness with twofold tenderness to the alleviation of suffering—and if not of bodily suffering, to that of the mind, so as to convince the invalid that illness is scarcely an affliction when it is the means of calling forth so vast an amount of sympathy and love. Nor indeed is bodily illness an affliction at all to be compared to those visitations of a darkened spirit, which convey the impression that we are not cared for by those we love, that we are not essential to their happiness, and that life to them would be as full of interest and enjoyment, if we were sleeping in the grave. With the watchful eye of a mother ever near, the kind voices of gentle sisters speaking softly by the bed of pain, the sweet flowers gathered by a brother's hand and brought up fresh with dew, the fond inquiries of an anxious father arriving earlier than his wont—with all those sweet appliances and means which are prompted by affection in a united and considerate family, illness, instead of being a season of desolateness and distress to a young sufferer, may often be converted into one of real enjoyment, just in proportion as it is made the means of renewing confidence, by calling forth convincing proofs of untiring tenderness and love. Instead, then, of feeling withered up into a concentration of self, the heart, under such circumstances, expands and warms into new life; and while gratitude weeps many a tear of weakness and humility, imagination, busy with the future, paints in glowing colors the rich return it may, perhaps, be possible to make for all the goodness and the benefit received.

We see clearly, then, that whether in health or in sickness, in joy or in sorrow, it is the mother's sacred duty to guard against any weakening of the bonds of family affection—to see that the fountain of love is kept fresh, and pure, and perpetually flowing. All those calculations which are to master its strong currents, have to come in after life; all those clear boundary lines, by which its floods are staid, have to be marked out on some future day. The first thing to be done is to keep

the fountain unsealed, and to let the life-inspiring waters flow; for without this, the pilgrimage of life will have neither flowers to enliven, verdure to refresh, nor fruits to sustain the traveller on his way.

CHAPTER VI.

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL HAPPINESS.

To a healthy child who has been well trained, nothing appears more easy than to be happy; to a child who has been badly trained, whose infant years have been neglected or motherless, nothing appears more difficult. There is often something in the bodily constitution, too, which stands in the way of individual happiness, without our being sensible of any actual disease; and the mother ought to watch carefully every symptom of this nature as indications of growing evil, which may frustrate much of the good she naturally looks forward to in the future experience of her child. She ought especially to observe, if, when the family group are loudest in their mirth, there is one who falls back from the cheerful circle, and who, instead of catching the natural infection of laughter and glee, sits moping alone, with cloudy brow, and drooping head, as if incapable of partaking in the general feeling. Such a tendency as this, is generally to be attributed to some bodily indisposition, of which perhaps the child is not aware; but it may also arise from a peculiarity of temperament, only to be accounted for upon the principle that there are diseases of mind, as well as body, the seeds of which are inherent in our nature.

If, in order to correct a melancholy tendency discoverable in infancy, the child is harshly treated, punished, scolded, and *compelled to play*, it is needless to foretell the utter ruin of its temper, and probably of its moral character altogether; for never yet was melancholy expelled except by the substitution of cheer-

fulness; and never yet was a child made cheerful by harshness and compulsion.

While thinking how much a kind and judicious mother can do towards correcting the melancholy temperament of her child, the heart aches for those who have no mother, who, in their moments of sadness and sorrow, are subjected to the ridicule of their companions, and who consequently bear about with them, in their intercourse with others, a wounded spirit smarting at every touch. The premature and excessive suffering of such children when left to the injudicious treatment of their companions, or to persons who pay little regard to what they experience, generally renders them selfish in their feelings, and in their tempers bitter and revengeful. They are selfish, upon the natural principle of caring for nobody, because they think nobody cares for them; and bitter and revengeful, because, being wrapped up in self, and that self, as they imagine, deeply injured, they are perpetually tempted to pay back, in their treatment of others, some portion of the suffering they endure.

It must be granted, however, that this description applies only to extreme cases; but still there are many degrees of the same evil, to be found existing in the world; and it is well for mothers to consider the extent to which their children are capable of suffering from want of attention rightly exercised, in order that they may form a higher estimate of the real benefits placed within their power to dispense.

It was the custom with many well-intentioned parents, some fifty years ago, to bring up children under a mistaken notion of rooting out evil, before good could be introduced; of breaking the natural will, crossing natural inclination, and subduing pride by constant mortification. Yet, notwithstanding the various modes of discipline adopted in carrying out this notion, people were just as self-willed, as determined to please themselves, and as proud, as they are now. It has by degrees become evident to persons of common sense, that such violent measures are not adapted to produce the desired effect. In-

deed, some of us have gone so far as to believe, that pride is no more likely to be eradicated by constant mortification, than appetite is likely to be destroyed by a scanty supply of food. Inclination, too, whenever it is crossed for the mere sake of punishment, seems to grow and acquire force under the infliction; just as a delicate frame gains strength by the application of a tonic; or, if in a few instances harsh treatment does succeed in breaking what is called the *natural will*, it can only be by destroying the power to will, which is in reality to render the moral character contemptible and weak.

But why should the mother, in her moral training, allow weeds of evil growth to gain the ascendancy, before she has planted flowers? Let her begin by keeping alive the wholesome glow of cheerfulness throughout the domestic atmosphere, and melancholy will not dare to spread her gloomy pall over a scene so radiant with joy, as that which is presented by a happy and well regulated home.

After all, however, it is possible that we do not value cheerfulness as we ought. We look upon it as an ordinary something which belongs to common minds—the property of the milkmaid, the housewife, or the husbandman. Yet, granting all this, we must still acknowledge it to be something which kings cannot purchase, though in all probability they often gladly would. And does not the fact of cheerfulness being generally considered as the reward of labor, teach us a pleasant and a useful lesson—that cheerfulness may be procured by industry—by always doing something, and by always having something to do?

It is in this manner chiefly, that the cheerfulness of infancy is maintained. Childhood is full of activity, and rich in resources; and therefore we make a great mistake when we lavish too much of the means of enjoyment upon young children. It is a little later in life that we begin to want the means of being happy; that the pulse of natural joy throbs languidly; and that we seek excitement, to warm us into life and feeling.

Nor is it in childhood alone that we see the benefit of cheerfulness, for with plenty of resources, and a cheerful disposition, persons more advanced in life are placed almost beyond the reach of disappointment. It is the dull, the flat, and the unoccupied, who hang their happiness upon an evening party, and who are always dependent upon some extraordinary excitement for breaking the monotony of their fruitless lives. "No one," says Miss Hamilton, "under the necessity of earning their daily subsistence, is in any danger of dying either of grief or love." And certainly that constant occupation which promotes cheerfulness, is the surest protection against diseases of the mind, and especially against melancholy.

While seeking the happiness of children, however, we must not be so forgetful of their good, as to pay no regard to the *kind* of happiness which is to be the object of their desires. We must not forget that we are all in a state of progression, and that children especially are only commencing what time will mature. Why then should we seek for them a low kind of happiness, such as the indulgence of appetite, or the mere gratification of the senses in any other way; since no circumstances in after life, no development of character, and no cultivation of those senses, can render such happiness intense in proportion to our improved facilities for obtaining it. Thus a child who has imbibed the idea that eating and drinking constitute the highest enjoyment, stands in the unfortunate position of having nothing more to gain; because no cultivation of the sense of taste can enlarge to any considerable extent the pleasure it is calculated to afford.

It is not thus with the pleasures of the mind. Ever progressing, ever enlarging the sphere of its enjoyments, human nature is capable of advancing onward, until it attains an approximation to the Divine; and the higher the range of thought and feeling which it occupies, the purer is the enjoyment of which it participates.

In this intellectual progress, mothers have more to do than most women seem to be

aware; because it is peculiarly their province to render the path of learning lovely and attractive, and thus to associate feelings of happiness with the acquisition of ideas, the prosecution of study, and the general improvement of the mental faculties. Mothers are apt to be startled at the idea of educating their children, as if education consisted in nothing but the routine of daily lessons, or as if the extreme of intellectual culture was dependent upon them. Happily, however, theirs is a labor of love, rather than of tasks, and it is simply by, and in, this love, that they are called upon to throw the whole weight of their influence, of their powers to charm, to amuse, and fix attention, into the scale of intellectual improvement; so that nothing shall be wanting on their part to render their children not only willing, but happy, to go on from step to step, until they learn to love intellectual pleasures for their own sake alone.

That a mother may effectually do this by the exercise of good feeling and tact, without being herself fully instructed in every branch of learning and science, is evident from the experience of different families; for we do not want beautiful instances of simple-hearted, unpretending mothers, not highly-gifted by nature in any way, who send their children to school in such a state of mental preparation, as to render it a pleasure to conduct their education to its utmost limits.

"Many ladies," says Miss Edgeworth, "show in general conversation the powers of easy raillery joined to reasoning unencumbered with pedantry. If they would employ their talents in the education of their children, they would probably be as well repaid for their exertions, as they can possibly be by the polite but transient applause of the visitors to whom they usually devote their powers of entertaining. A little praise or blame—a smile from a mother, or a frown—a moment's attention, or a look of cold neglect—have the happy or the fatal power of repressing or of exciting the energy of a child, of directing his understanding to useful or pernicious purposes. Scarcely a

day passes in which children do not make some attempt to reason about the little events which interest them, and upon these occasions a mother who joins in conversation with her children, may instruct them in the art of reasoning without the parade of logical disquisitions."

It is not then extraordinary powers which are wanted for this purpose, but the right exercise of those peculiar talents with which women are naturally endowed, combined with that earnest love on the part of the mother, which enables her to pursue unwearied the instruction of her children in all common things, and to watch every opportunity for blending information with enjoyment.

I would not, however, by any means neglect those auspicious occasions which occur in every family, of throwing off all restraint, and giving free vent to the overflow of affectionate and unbounded joy. The return of some member of the household, the arrival of beloved friends, birthdays and other seasons of festivity, afford ample scope for these outbursts of natural feeling, which ought to be encouraged as a means of keeping up the natural and healthy tone of youthful minds; for as an hour now and then of absolute romping does infinite good to the bodily health, so an hour now and then of unrestrained and absolute merriment, does equal good to the spirits and characters of children.

In a rude and ill-regulated family, it is to be feared that such seasons would be marked by turbulence and disaster, beyond what could be rendered conducive to much enjoyment, especially on the part of the older members; but I am supposing the case of a well-regulated family, so trained by the mother, and so under the influence of delicate, affectionate, and generous feelings, that their wildest play would not be rude, nor their loudest mirth offensive.

It seems to be one of the peculiarities of English character not to know how to *manage* enjoyment; while our neighbors on the continent, sometimes *manage* it a little too much. Those elaborate or costly presents by which they are so fond of creating a beauti-

ful surprise, those birthday scenes got up with so much machinery of contrivance, and all those periodical displays of generosity and affection, though admirably adapted to figure in a book, have a little too much *make-believe* about them, to be exactly suited to the reality of English habits. Besides which, there always hangs about an English heart a certain dread of failure, a horror of being committed in an act of folly, and a shrinking from ridicule, which greatly lessen the number of our enjoyments, and often casts a shadow over the gaiety which might otherwise be both harmless and refreshing. There is also, it must be confessed, a something desperate and extreme about the English character when strongly excited and destitute of restraint, which seems to render greater restriction necessary in a social point of view, than is required by people of some other countries; yet I cannot but think that much of this, and much that we see and grieve over in the conduct of our country-people abroad, arises from the want of better regulation in private families, of higher aims in the union of taste with feeling; but chiefly from the absence of all care that the happiness of children should be encouraged to the utmost extent which good order will allow, but at the same time blended with a little more nicety as to the choice of means, a little more tact on the part of mothers, sisters, and mistresses of families, a little more taste—in short, a little more of the true poetry of life, so that the general tone of the mind, even in its joyous moments, shall be in strict harmony with good feeling.

Were this the case, I believe we should all live in less fear of youth overleaping the accustomed barrier of good manners, so as to run riot in its excess of merriment; and while by the same means we should learn to suffer less from the dread of being ridiculous, we should be more generally cheerful, and, upon the whole, more happy than we are.

And to whom are we to look for improving at once the manners and the morals of social life in this most delicate point, but to the mothers of England? Servants and nurses in whose company so many children are al-

lowed to play without restraint, and in no other; they are not fit for such a task. Fathers are seldom present, and when they are, they want the nicety and the tact to manage the minute affairs of domestic life, and especially those of individual feeling. It is to mothers then, alone, that we can look for the improvement so much needed here; and with all woman's taste and tact, her quickness of feeling, play of fancy, minuteness of observation, and facility of adaptation to circumstances; with all a mother's love in addition to these, she wants only a higher sense of a mother's duty to convince her that the joyous moments—the holidays of mirth which her children are permitted to enjoy, are those which she, above all other human beings, has the privilege of sharing, and, at the same time, of converting into lasting good.

There is no reason why children should be either selfish or vulgar in their mirth; yet how many do we find who can be well-behaved in what is called company, and yet when let loose to play, are a disgrace to their parents; who, perhaps, from never associating themselves with their children's merriment, but having been accustomed to send them always into the nursery to play, and into the company of servants to run wild, have imposed upon them a sort of artificial restraint, which makes them decent and tolerable only while it lasts, but leaves them, whenever it is withdrawn, perfect monsters of rudeness, turbulence, and disorder.

It is not difficult to foresee that such children will grow up with a constant liability to commit themselves in after life, which, under the most favorable circumstances, will mark their habits with a want of ease and of true refinement; while, under unfavorable circumstances, it will not improbably be the means of leading them into egregious folly, gross excess, or fatal error.

I would not willingly be supposed to forget that religious principle alone is sufficient to preserve even such persons as are here described, from the extremes alluded to; but I am also aware, that even in religious characters, there are sometimes strange anomalies,

deviations from true taste, and even unconscious offences against good feeling, which do incalculable harm to the interests of religion; and I am therefore the more earnest in writing on this subject, that mothers should begin in time by laying the foundation of lovely, good, and happy characters, at once.

We sometimes find among truly excellent persons, a painful and unnatural kind of dread of being too cheerful; and where the pleasures of childhood have been wholly neglected, where buoyant spirits have been allowed to run and riot without a mother's care, there is unquestionably great danger of the barrier of propriety being broken through in after life by the indulgence of cheerfulness. But how deeply it is to be regretted, that that particular state of mind which is in reality the most truly happy, should be deterred, by fear, from exhibiting itself before the world in its natural character of healthy cheerfulness, and thus give cause for an opinion, too frequently entertained, that religion is a gloomy thing! If by no other reason the pious mother can be convinced of the importance of her influence in this particular sphere of duty, surely it is sufficient, if by sharing with her children in their harmless mirth, and teaching them how to be happy without offence to God or man, she can beautify their characters in after life with more of those graces of mind and manners, which are at once attractive to the world, and honorable to the cause of religion.

As the first and surest means of promoting individual, as well as social happiness, I would propose the cultivation of a spirit of love. The more we love, the less our thoughts and interests are centred in self; and consequently the less we suffer from all those little personal slights, vexations, and disappointments, which so often imbitter the cup of life. The more we love, also, the more we forgive; *and to whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much*; so that nothing is more true, than that love begets love in return. Thus then our energies are drawn out into those kindred charities, which,

whether given or received in the true spirit of generous affection, have power to lighten every burden we have to bear, and to sweeten every draught of which we have to drink. The more we love, the more we enjoy the inestimable privilege of being able to ask a blessing upon what we desire, and upon what we do; because we can neither lie down at night, nor rise to the duties of the day, without bearing in our hearts the remembrance of that sweet fellowship, which binds together the whole human race as one family, under the protection of our *Father who is in heaven*.

How little is understood of the real value and right exercise of love, by those morbid miserable beings, who fix their whole hopes of happiness upon one, or two, or many, and think they are loving, while they are only thirsting to be loved—only waiting in anxious and fretful expectation for evidence that they are so; or recoiling from the world with disappointment and spleen on every cause for suspicion that they are not. Such persons generally keep a strict account against society, of what they consider due to themselves, as well as of what they receive. Yet they forget to compare it with another account—with what is due *from* them, and what they actually *give*.

But there is no calculation, and there needs no account, on the part of those whose hearts have been imbued in early childhood with the true spirit of love. To such it becomes as the very breath of life, for without being able to love, they would pine and wither. If, in the interchange of kind offices, they occasionally find themselves neglected, what is that to them? In their love they seek only the good and the happiness of others, and that is generally more or less in their power to promote. If the beings by whom they are surrounded, and perhaps even the nearest and the dearest, are not all they desire, it is the noblest exercise of love to forgive, and the next to endeavor to improve. If also, in the exercise of affection, they meet sometimes with but little or no return, they accept the rebuke as from a Fa-

ther, who, in chastening those whom he loves, has appointed such means for leading them into closer self-examination, into stricter watchfulness, and more faithful endeavors, in order that no fault indulged, no opportunity neglected, and no faculty unemployed, may stand in the way of rendering the service he has enjoined, as a duty we owe one towards another, more acceptable in his sight.

Such then is the effect of an early and consistent exercise of the spirit of love, extending in the first place to all beneath the paternal roof, and afterwards throughout the varied intercourse we hold with society—a spirit, which, where it is rightly exercised, has no tendency to blind us to the faults of others, or to lead us to undervalue those proofs of affection which are really directed to ourselves; but which creates around us a kind of genial atmosphere, too clear and bright for the weeds which grow around our path to remain undiscovered; yet, at the same time, so pure, healthy, and invigorating, as to stimulate to eager cultivation of the flowers, secure in the confidence that they will abundantly repay our care.

Nor should we forget, in the contemplation of this subject especially, that beautiful harmony in the order of Providence, by which all that is best adapted to produce good to others, is in reality most conducive to our own happiness. Had we been created only to feel happy in the exercise of those passions which dissever families, and break asunder the bonds of society, how different would have been our situation on earth! But in the benign commandment of the Saviour to his disciples that they should love one another, in making this love even the test of their fellowship with him, we recognize at once a principle, which, above all others, has power to bless and to bind on earth, while it constitutes a passport to the blessedness and the union of heaven.

Next in degree to the exercise of the affections, as a means of promoting individual as well as social happiness, is that of one of the faculties of the human mind, the cultiva-

tion of which is too little regarded in the training of youth. I mean the faculty of admiration, which, if properly directed, under the influence of religious feeling, has the effect of raising, by imperceptible degrees, the moral nature of man in his intellectual, as well as his spiritual enjoyments.

It is too much the tendency of the present day to confine the exercise of admiration to what is of man's invention, elaborate, costly, and artificial—to the arts and manufactures which belong to a high state of civilization, to the patent inventions of the day, to the newest fabrics, or the most expensive ornaments—in short, to all which may be regarded as characteristic of an "age of great cities;" rather than to a development of those principles of harmony and beauty, which pervade the universe at large. I presume not to say that these are not good—good in a certain manner, and to a certain extent; but good as the objects of our highest admiration, they certainly are not, and especially for this reason—because they are material, and only gratify the senses, without leaving any beneficial or indelible impression upon the soul.

The cultivation of a true taste necessarily belongs to this part of our subject, because it rests very much with parents to direct their children's admiration as they choose; and whatever they most admire, becomes naturally the standard of true taste to them. It may fairly be said, then, that the taste of the present day is for every thing material. When young people now turn their attention to intellectual pursuits, it is to collect specimens, not ideas. Imagination in its higher walks is discarded, and even our works of fiction are only valued so far as they present a succession of active scenes, so exaggerated as to produce the effect of startling the senses. All this may be tolerated in the present generation, because we have yet among us the remains of a higher order of thought and feeling; but it will tell to a lamentable extent upon the next, when all enthusiasm for poetry and the fine arts will have become extinct. Already it may be said that poetry is banished from our world; and if painting still lin-

gers on the stage of public observation, it is too much regarded as a scene—a show—a pageant of the moment, and no more. It is true that music has burst forth among the million, to assert its rights as a natural and almost necessary gratification; but it is to be feared that the machinery by which it is got up, the noise, and the exhibition, have more to do with this means of enjoyment, than the voice and the language which it offers to the music of the soul.

I am aware that I am venturing upon dangerous ground, presuming to oppose a mere straw or a feather, to the great tide of popular feeling, but when one has the means of speaking to the many, it becomes a sacred duty to say in what we really think mankind are regardless of their happiness and their good.

Now it must be evident to all who think seriously on this subject, that if we fix our ideas of the highest excellence, and consequently our admiration upon what is material, costly, and elaborate, our happiness in this world must depend upon our pecuniary means, for without money there can be no possession of this material excellence. Hence, then, the strife, the turmoil, the dread in which we live, lest adverse circumstances, the change of public fancy, the lowering of markets, or the failure of a bargain, should deprive us of that which is our chief, or only source of enjoyment. It is evident too, that there can be no refreshment to the mind, in the pursuit of this material excellence; because there is nothing in it which brings the thoughts into necessary and direct relation to the Supreme Being; and hence the weariness with which so many thousands pursue their unremitting avocations, not one half of the faculties, with which as immortal beings they are endowed, having found exercise in what constitutes the business of their lives.

For the remedy of this evil, I am not visionary enough to look to any alteration in our political economy, or to suppose that a new company will start up to protect the poetry of life; but I still think that much might be done by mothers to instil into the minds of

children a higher taste, and at the same time one which would be productive of more lasting happiness. The season in all probability will come, when their children will have to mix with the many in a course of action which scarcely admits of time for the exercise of thought, beyond such mental calculations as are required in carrying on the business of the day ; and since the dull routine of necessary occupation in the present times prevents in a great measure those stirring and intense emotions which fix impressions indelibly upon the mind, it becomes a more important duty on the part of mothers, to seek for their children those sources of enjoyment which the natural world affords—those sources of enjoyment of which a reverse of fortune will not be likely to deprive them ; which require no strife or contention to obtain ; which can be shared with the whole human race, and still enhanced by sharing ; and which, while they expand and invigorate the mind, throw it open to clear and indelible impressions of the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of its Creator.

That natural joyousness of childhood, which is the surest and the happiest medium for receiving impressions, is best cultivated in a country life. Where this cannot be enjoyed altogether, it is the duty of parents to take their children into the country sometimes, and as often as they can ; and if such seasons of relaxation be properly employed, the time and money bestowed upon them will not be found wasted.

It is worth some cost, and some effort, to give young people lasting and deep impressions of the beautiful and sublime in nature ; nor need this be confined to nature alone ; for, having imbibed such impressions, they will ever afterwards be able to recognize the same principles in art. Yet how often, instead of roaming over hills, listening to waterfalls, and holding converse with the spirit of nature, are children taken in the summer to fashionable bathing-places, or other scenes of public resort, to wear their best clothes, walk out in tight shoes, and hear their mammas and aunts descant upon the elegance of the

Dutchess of D—'s equipage ! How often is the conversation, during their walks on the public promenades, filled up with what distinguished persons have arrived at the new Hotel ; what bonnet was worn by Lady B— ; who danced with the young heiress ; and to what places, but particularly to what shops, all the world resorts ! And this is called going into the country ! If such be going into the country, we may safely say it is taking the town along with us.

Oh, never let such an insult be offered to the trusting heart of youth, as to call that nature, which the "glass of fashion" offers to our view ! If young people go to breathe the invigorating sea-breezes, let them, in justice to nature, see the great ocean as it really is, broad, bold, and deep, without the fringe of fashion on its shores. Let them listen to the roaring waves, and run before the sparkling foam, and watch the hollow breakers rise and curl, and dash themselves to rest. Or let them, on still evenings, see the moonlight on the water, her silver pathway over the great deep crossed at intervals by the fisherman's lonely bark, while his rugged form appears for a moment in dark relief, as if contrasting the corporeal with the spiritual. And then let music break the silence—music soft and sweet, and long remembered ; for these are pictures graven on the mind ; and the sounds then whispered to the soul, are like the language it was born with for the utterance of its secret joys.

Let parents sometimes take their children to the wild hills, where the foot of fashion has never trod. Let them pluck the forest flowers, and weave garlands of the purple heather, and spread their arms to catch the breeze, and look abroad from the bold height, on, far away—away into the distance, until they see the littleness of intervening things. Let them descend into the valley, go into the cottages of the poor, and talk with the shepherd of the phenomena of winds and clouds. Let them learn of him what observations he has made in his lone watchings among the hills. Let them ask of the peasant about seed-time and harvest ; let them taste of his

household bread ; let them listen to the legends of the place, the old wife's story, the history of the fairy-ring, or of the castle where the great lord dwelt in the ancient times. Let them trace the course of the mountain stream from the far heights where it falls into a stony basin drop by drop, down the cataract steps by which it leaps into the plain ; and then show them the same stream in the distance, a calm deep river winding its silvery way towards the sea. Nor let them overlook the beautiful and no less wonderful minutæ of nature—the grasshopper in the rich meadow, the wild bees among the broom, or the trout in the sylvan stream. Teach them then to know the song of every warbler in the summer woods ; point out to them the old rookery around the chimneys of the farm-house ; and all the while describe to them the wonders of the vast realm of nature, with the habits and instincts of those innumerable tribes, scarcely heard of in our cities ; so that they shall feel, and understand, and remember, by the strong impressions produced upon the spot, that there has been at work, in all this, some mighty and all-pervading Power, before whom the inventions of man are but as the honey and the comb of the little hive beneath the rays of a noonday sun.

If I were asked to point out the happiest situation on earth, I believe I should say—that in which children enjoy a free life in the country, shared with affectionate brothers and sisters, and watched over by kind and judicious parents. Yet how little pains are taken to procure this happiness for children ! How much more intent are persons in general upon obtaining handsome drawing-rooms, and costly dresses—in short, upon keeping up that external appearance, which is a passport to what is called good society. And when the drawing-room is furnished, the dresses purchased, and the appearance unexceptionable, what is it all worth ? Not one of the thousand aches of head and heart which the extreme of material excellence must under ordinary circumstances cost.

But I shall be accused of barbarism—of wishing to go back to a state of nature, and to live on forest-fruit, if I write in this strain ; for it would require volumes to explain the subject fully, in all its bearings upon human happiness. Suffice it then to say, that it is only the *excess* of admiration bestowed upon material excellence, of which I complain—the habit of admiring *only* what money can procure ; and consequently of neglecting those sources of happiness which are offered freely to all, and the enjoyment of which is associated with activity and cheerfulness—with health, both of body and mind.

By confining our taste too much to what is at the same time material and artificial, we discard imagination from the sphere of our enjoyments, and consequently contract and vulgarize our means of gratification. There may be a play of fancy in the invention of a new pattern—there may be a display of elegance in the furnishing of a house—there may be an agreeable combination of colors in a fashionable costume, and all these are worthy of admiration, in their way ; but such objects of admiration do not expand the feelings and elevate the soul ; they merely develop in a familiar and practical form, those principles of order, harmony, and beauty, which ought previously to have been impressed upon the mind by the more striking phenomena of nature. In order properly to enjoy the works of art, these principles should previously have been recognized in their more distinct and intelligible characters. In order to be duly appreciated, beauty should some time or other have burst, as it were, upon the eye and the mind of the child at once. It should have been constrained to admire it, and to admire it heartily ; for it is important to our happiness that we should be able to admire with warmth, and even with enthusiasm ; and pitiable indeed is that being, who, after spending a life in learning what ought to be admired, finds at last that the power is wanting.

With regard to imagination, it is often spoken of as a dangerous faculty, and treated as if given for man's misery, rather than his

good ; yet surely it must in justice be allowed, that if, in connection with an ill-regulated mind, imagination is capable of rendering sorrow more intense, it is equally capable of enhancing, under more favorable circumstances, all our highest and most refined enjoyments.

Why then should we wish to discard the use of this faculty altogether ? The fact is, we cannot discard it. Imagination is ever at work, combining preconceived impressions into new and striking forms ; and where no allowance is made for the exercise of this faculty—where it is pent up without any natural or appropriate outlet—it will burst forth like a smothered flame, and in all probability deface or consume, when it might have illuminated with a welcome and cheering light.

I was once in a dark parlor in the midst of a great city, where a little child, just able to liep a few words, was busily employed in playing that he gathered up the green of the carpet, which he called parsley, and pretended to lay in handfuls upon a stool, which also boasted some corresponding green. "Don't say so, my dear. It is not parsley," said the father several times, in serious concern for his little boy's veracity. Alas ! poor child ! the only notion it had ever formed of any thing fresh and green, was of the parsley it had seen garnishing a dish ; and this idea, with which its imagination was so busy, was to be utterly extinguished, because it was only an idea, and not a reality. The child, if it wished to amuse itself, would have to begin again with another set of ideas, with the faded worsted, and the little old stool it had played with so often before. It is needless to say, that with the extinction of its notion about the green parsley, its pleasant illusion was gone. It might strike, and pull, and lift, or act the mere animal in any other way, for under such circumstances there was little else to be done ; but it might not use again the remembrance of a sprig of green parsley, so as to beautify with this image the little world in which it was pent up.

The father of this child was a talented and

excellent man, himself an enthusiastic admirer of poetry, but he had probably never reflected upon the important place which imagination occupies in the minds of those who enjoy the purest happiness, as well as those to which the greatest influence over others belongs. He was not one, however, who could have failed to observe that the language of the Holy Scriptures is pre-eminent in its display of the exercise of imagination. In all the most impressive sermons too, and in all those appeals to the human heart which produce the strongest conviction and the deepest effect, imagination is the instrument chiefly made use of, although often unconsciously, by the speaker.

Since then we cannot, if we would, destroy this faculty, and since moreover it is capable of elevating, at the same time that it enlarges, the sphere of our enjoyments, we should seek for it an appropriate and healthy exercise, even in the season of early youth. And here it is especially to be observed, that it is to the uninformed, the indolent, and the low-minded, that imagination is the most dangerous in its exercise. When the mind is well stored, as well as well regulated, the habits active and industrious, and the taste truly elevated and refined, works of imagination and specimens of art, as a means of gratification, may be allowed to a much greater extent, than when the associations are vulgar, and the fancy consequently likely to be caught by what is least worthy of attention. An intense and absorbing admiration of what is excellent in poetry and art, will lead the mind which is imbued with a deep sense of beauty, over much that a coarse or vulgar mind would detect as objectionable, and which would in reality be so to it. We cannot therefore be too careful how we introduce to characters of this stamp, even those works of imagination which all the world has conceded the right to be considered as standards of excellence. There are many pleasures for the low-minded in their own way, and they ought to be content with these, rather than endeavor to lay hold of such as they are neither capable of appreciating, nor of turning to good account.

It is too common to call that modesty, which is only vulgar-mindedness ; but on the other hand, it is the mother's delicate part so to watch over the impressions and associations of her children, as to guard them with the most scrupulous care, wherever delicacy of feeling is concerned ; because if once destroyed, the purity of the mind will in all probability never be restored. There will be much in their future intercourse with the world to blunt the fine edge of feeling, and therefore it is better a thousand times to go forth into society a little too scrupulous, than too regardless of that nice boundary-line which marks out the limits of true delicacy of feeling.

Next to the study of nature, I believe that of the fine arts has much to do with refining the character, and raising it above those grovelling and vulgar interests which occupy too much of our time and thoughts. I forget what writer uses the expression, but it has been well said, that "the too great keenness of our uncharitable temper may almost always be softened by a taste for the picturesque, as well as the harmonious ;" and certain it is, that a mind deeply impressed with a sense of the beautiful, conversant with the principles of taste, and enriched with the treasures of imagination, will be less likely than one whose admiration has never been attracted by subjects of this nature, to occupy itself with the little bickerings and jealousies which arise out of interests of a mere local and transitory nature.

We should take care then, that in the enjoyments of children, there is blended a reference to the principles of true taste ; and, as in all things relating to the training of youth, we ought to act upon the plan of excluding what is objectionable, by filling up the space with what is good ; so we ought to begin early to cultivate a just estimate of what is really worthy of admiration. How few persons think of this, who live in great cities, and take their children to see all the passing shows of the day, in preference to those objects of deep and lasting interest from which a true taste might be formed ! How many too, on

taking their children for the first time to London, fly here and there in pursuit of sights which will be forgotten in a month, and never spare a quiet half-hour for Westminster Abbey, or for any of those exhibitions of sculpture and painting, where they may both think and feel—where they may drink from the fountain of beauty, and be still.

I do not mean to say that children at a very early age would derive any benefit from such objects of attraction. It would be a waste of effort to attempt to introduce to their minds any conception of beauty, as an abstract idea. But there is a time when a sense of the beautiful, the harmonious, and the sublime, begins to dawn upon the soul ; and the mother, if she has any poetry in her own nature, knows well how to discern the commencement of this new existence, for I can call it nothing less.

One of the symptoms of this change, is a habit of deep thought. I have thus far spoken of individual happiness chiefly in its character of cheerfulness and joy ; but we all know that there is, beyond this, a happiness more profound, and that all deep happiness is still. Children vary much in their capability for this feeling. Some begin at a very early age to creep quietly to the mother's side, and to lead her out into converse upon deep and interesting themes ; and it is then, above all other times, that the mother ought to bear upon her heart a sense of that higher, deeper, more absorbing happiness, which is derived from the contemplation of a Supreme Being, in connection with his love for all the families of earth, his care of the helpless, and his merciful designs for the redemption and the eternal salvation of all.

Alas ! how often is the idea of a Supreme Being brought first before the minds of children, when they are under chastisement for having done wrong ! How many are told then, and then only, that there is an All-seeing eye upon them, detecting their falsehoods, and discovering their secret sins ! while those sweet moments of familiar intercourse, when the dew of affection lies fresh upon the soul, and hope springs forth in the bright sunshine

of happiness—how often are such moments neglected, or occupied only with mean and trivial things! Yet why, when we are so ready in the management of children, to bring to our aid the terrors of a God of justice—why are we not equally ready to make use of the attractiveness of a God of love?

I am aware that parents whose own minds are under the influence of religious feeling, in the course of their religious instruction, but especially when they explain to their children the scheme of man's redemption through the Saviour's sacrifice of himself, dwell much upon the kindness and the mercy of Him who so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son to save sinners. But children generally receive many impressions with regard to the Supreme Being, long before they can be made to enter into this view of his character; and it is chiefly as relates to their earliest impressions—to those just views which are to fill and occupy the mind to the exclusion of all others, that I would urge upon mothers the importance of directing their attention to this subject.

I am convinced that nothing need be lost—nay, rather that much may be gained, by associating feelings of happiness with the first impressions which a child receives of a supreme and superintending Power. I am convinced of this, because there is no faculty of the soul capable of producing enjoyment by its exercise upon the things of time, which is not also capable of enhancing that enjoyment a thousand-fold, by its exercise upon the things of eternity. When we speak of affection, it is something certainly to feel bound to those we love, even for the brief term of our existence upon earth; but it is nothing in comparison with that bond of unbroken and unending union which will hold together the one great family of the redeemed in heaven. When we speak of admiration, it is something to behold the shadowing forth of beauty upon earth, to feel the swelling of the heart in its comprehension of the sublime, or its repose in the deep sense of the harmony of nature; but of what value would be all this “enlargement of exist-

ence,” if here it was to end? if the barrier of the grave was to put a stop to the spirit in its upward flight, and if death was to hide the beautiful forever? No; we have learned a happier lesson than this; for we know, and we ought to feel, that as the exercise of love and admiration afford us the highest enjoyment here, they are, above all other faculties, those which, if rightly exercised, are capable of adding to our felicity when the shadows of time shall be lost in the light of eternity.

CHAPTER VII.

MORAL COURAGE AND WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS.

ONE great defect in the minor morals of society in the present day, appears to me to be a want of moral courage; and as this is chiefly felt under the encroachments of worldly-mindedness, I propose to class the two subjects together, anomalous as they may at first sight appear, in one chapter.

A want of moral courage is most frequently recognized in a fear of acting in, or even of advocating, a good cause, where blame would attach to the individual who should venture to do so. The different parties in religion, politics, and almost every thing else, which separate individuals, and oppose each other, in the present times, operate as a constant check upon the exercise of moral courage, because we can with difficulty act or speak without offending one set of prejudices or another.

We must not, however, call that courage which is simply an absence of fear, owing to an absence of knowledge. We sometimes find a thoughtless and inexperienced rider willing to mount the most dangerous horse, and young travellers rushing headlong into peril, without being aware of the risk to which they are exposed. But this arises out of a very different exercise of the mental faculties from what is required—first, to see the danger, then to calculate the proba-

bility of escape, and after having decided that the motive is sufficient to justify the risk, to face the peril, whatever it may be. Such is the character of true courage, though it frequently operates habitually, where there is little time for making calculations of this nature.

This particular exercise of courage, however, relates chiefly to personal danger, and even as such is well worthy the attention of mothers in the training of their children; but that to which I would more especially call their attention, relates more to the dread of blame, the annoyance of opposition, or the apprehension of suffering in our worldly interests. And here, as well as in the former case, we must endeavor to arrive at clear views of the subject in all its bearings. We must not always take that for moral courage, which induces some persons to speak directly to a point considered by others of more delicacy as unapproachable; because this is too often done simply from an absence of feeling, and thus too often obtains a degree of credit of which it is wholly unworthy, as being the result of candor and a love of truth.

Neither must we call that moral courage which leads vulgar-minded and prejudiced persons to speak in a summary way of liking or disliking certain people and things, without any sufficient reason; though this mode of speaking is apt to gain very much upon children, whose passions, affections, and sympathies, are more easily awakened than their reasoning powers. Fond as they are, then, of pronouncing that decisive sentence—"I like," or, "I dislike," they ought to be encouraged to suspend the one, but more especially the other, until they have some idea what are the grounds upon which they pass such decided judgment.

A want of moral courage lies at the root of almost all the falsehoods which are told in early youth. There is in later life sometimes a love of falsehood for its own sake, which belongs to a degree of depravity not properly taken into account in these pages. And there is also, occasionally, found a strange propensity to tell voluntary and aimless un-

truths, a case which so nearly borders upon insanity, as to be almost beyond the reach of moral principle. With such a natural phenomenon, there are happily few directors of youth who have any thing to do.

The mother's great duty is to endeavor so to fortify the moral character, as that children shall not be afraid to tell the truth—that they shall learn to love truth for its own sake, and to hate a lie. And here it may not be out of place to observe, that, so far as is practicable, we ought, in the training of youth, to search out and make use of all those faculties and propensities of human nature, which are capable of being turned to good account. It has been said by a popular writer of the present day, that "he who cannot hate, cannot love;" and without altogether coinciding with this extreme view of the case, we must allow that those persons who are most cordial in their affections, are generally the warmest in their feelings of indignation and abhorrence, where they believe they see just cause for such feelings. What then is to be done with this propensity to hate, or to abhor? Is it possible that so powerful an impulse should have been given for the sole purpose of being subdued, or rendered utterly extinct? That it should so often be abused, and directed to the worst purposes, by aiming at individual character, and opposing itself to the kindly charities of life, is no proof of its being incapable of good; because there is no propensity of our nature, not even that of loving, which may not be converted into a means of producing misery rather than happiness—evil rather than good.

Let us think well on this subject, then, and try if we cannot find some wholesome and beneficial exercise for the impetuous warmth of those feelings, which expend themselves in hating what is abhorrent to their nature, as well as in loving what is in harmony with it. Let us ask whether there may not be a righteous indignation—a contempt of what is mean—a hatred of what is bad, which may be lawfully indulged? I confess that to me it appears that there is—that without such feelings, little would be done in the

world for the correction of abuse, or the rescue of the oppressed; and I believe if we would examine deeply the motives of some of those noble and magnanimous efforts by which the helpless have been torn from the grasp of cruelty, the weak protected from the aggressions of the strong, the slave set free from bondage, and the doors of the dungeon thrown open, we should find that the active impulse most immediately in operation, was a well-directed hatred of injustice, oppression, and cruelty of every kind.

Let us begin, then, by endeavoring to make use of this impulse, by directing it against whatever is unkind, unfair, or untrue. Let us, in plain words, teach children to *hate* falsehood; and to hate it not only when spoken, but also when acted. It is a lamentable fact, that many a little child brought up under parental care, with a cordial hatred of falsehood, and as cordial a love of truth, sent early to school to be tried by new tests, and subjected to new temptations, is there, for want of moral courage, literally startled into falsehood, though loathing and hating it all the time. The loud authoritative demand made in the midst of numbers—"Who has done this?" or, "What naughty boy or girl has done that?" has not unfrequently the effect of paralyzing the moral feelings for the instant, so that terror gains the ascendancy, and the poor little culprit endeavors to conceal its transgression by a lie, and perhaps by a second or a third in order to conceal the first.

Nor is it at school alone that occasions occur in which the veracity of youth is sorely tried—indeed more tried than it ever can be in after life; because when we have once attained the independence of maturer years, it is not possible, under ordinary circumstances, that any one should have it in their power to place us in a situation so fraught with terror and distress. In mercy, as well as in justice, to children, then, we ought to endeavor to fortify them by moral courage against such trials, in order that when they do occur, the dread of punishment may be lost sight of, in a noble ambition to dare to speak the truth.

I am the more earnest on the subject of moral courage, because I believe too much is done, and that often by excellent persons, to humble, crush, and extinguish natural feeling altogether. Personal humility, we certainly cannot err in promoting to almost any extent; but there are some noble aspirations belonging to our nature, which ought, by all means, to be encouraged; and first among these, I would place an ambition directed to the sole object of doing right in the sight of God and man, under the apprehension of no other danger than that of offending against the Divine law by doing wrong.

Without any reference to a future state, or to the will of a Supreme Being, I am not aware by what means moral courage could be inculcated, or blended with the education of a child; but by the help of this reference, a pious mother has always in her power the means of directing the attention of her child from a lesser to a greater good—from the mere chance of escaping chastisement, to the hope of doing what is most pleasing in the sight of God.

Moral courage consists chiefly in daring to choose, at the moment of trial, a great in preference to a little good; even though the former should be remote, and the latter immediately at hand. It consists in disregarding the transient results which must necessarily ensue, for the sake of more widely extended and important consequences. All this, however, is but seldom taken into account at the moment of action; and therefore it is the more necessary that mothers should render the exercise of moral courage on the part of their children familiar, and habitual. And there is one fact connected with this subject, which makes it almost an act of mercy to do so—it is, that the most delicately sensitive characters, those who shrink from the bare apprehension of giving offence, or incurring blame—to whom a harsh word or an angry look from those whom they love and esteem, is almost like a sentence of death—that such characters, though their love of truth may be as great, or perhaps greater, than that of bolder, harder, and less

sensitive natures, are far more in danger of being betrayed into falsehood from the impulse of the moment. Thus, among a number of children, governed only by the general laws of school-discipline, those bold unfeeling characters who have little regard for the opinion of others, and who are under no temptation to conceal their faults from a dread of incurring blame, frequently obtain all the credit of being lovers of truth; while the characters above described may in reality love truth as well, or better, yet having been surprised into falsehood, they suffer the two-fold punishment of being self-condemned, and at the same time charged, perhaps publicly, and opprobriously, with being *makers* and *lovers of a lie*.

There are many cases in which the exercise of moral courage may be so rewarded by a mother's approbation, as to make an indelible impression upon the mind of a child; and such opportunities should never be lost sight of, because it is chiefly by indirect means that the character can be strengthened to resist the momentary temptations of apparent self-interest.

We will suppose a case in which a charge of delinquency is brought against one member of a family, who is, in this instance, really innocent, but whose general conduct is such as to warrant unfavorable suspicion. Father, mother, brothers, and sisters, are all agreed that he must be the guilty person, with but one exception, and that a little sister, who knows that by taking his part she will bring upon herself the suspicion of being an accomplice in his act. The little girl knows this, and feels it; above all, she feels that to incur the blame of her parents is a cruel alternative, yet she still speaks out, and defends her brother, because she believes that in this instance he is innocent. Her noble defence meets with nothing but reproof. She is put down, censured, and, more than all, suspected; but still she maintains the cause of her brother. A few days perhaps develop the real truth. The boy is innocent, and his sister was all the while right. Is the mother then to pass over, unnoticed, so noble and

persevering an effort on the part of her child? Certainly not. Although herself in the wrong, and under the necessity of confessing before her children that she has been so; yet a generous and noble-minded mother will see in an instant what is the course of conduct she ought to pursue, and she will rejoice in such an opportunity of expressing her warmest approval.

Although the telling of direct falsehoods from a want of courage to speak the truth, is the first and most obvious exemplification of what is meant by an absence of moral courage, there exists throughout all those varied intricacies which belong to the structure of society, a constant occurrence of occasions, in which moral courage may be called into action for the support of integrity against the allurements of artifice, and the temptations of self-interest. In almost all those trials which beset mankind in the respectable walks of life, it is not from actual propensities to vice that they fail to maintain their ground; but from a little, and perhaps an unconscious leaning to self-interest, a little desire to keep well with the world or with a certain party; and all that endless train of *little* motives which mix themselves in with almost every thing we say and do.

Now, it is chiefly against these that I would bring into operation the strong power of moral courage, not to uproot or destroy such motives one by one; that would indeed be to dis sever the hydra heads of an unconquerable enemy. It would in fact be to destroy the whole fabric of human nature. Instead, therefore, of attempting to uproot these plants of evil growth, I would begin in the early training of children to lay the strong foundation of a solid character, by making moral courage one of the first elements of its being. I would begin with a high standard, by aiming at what is noble, great, and good; and leaving the littlenesses of artificial life to vanish into nothing; as they necessarily would, by the mind being stored with materials of a weightier and more sterling nature.

But how is this great and important work

to be accomplished? First, I should say, by impressing upon the minds of children a just estimate of all moral qualities. It may occasion greater inconvenience to the mother at the moment, that her child should tear a new dress, than that it should tell a falsehood; but if, from any personal feeling, she allows her disapprobation to be expressed as strongly in one case, as in the other; if she evinces as much dissatisfaction at the fall of a china cup, as at an act of meanness or deception practised by one child towards another; or if her delight is as manifest on the arrival of a new article of furniture, as on some evidence in her family that wrong feeling has been overcome, or noble and generous sentiments called into exercise, she will do incalculable mischief, by destroying what ought to be a clear distinction betwixt the degrees of moral feeling comprehended in these different cases.

It is the same throughout the whole of that discipline to which youth is subjected. We must keep the balance true, not only as regards actions, but motives, so far as they can be ascertained; and never from personal feeling, or momentary impulse, allow undue weight to be thrown into either scale. Above all, we must maintain a constant reference to what is approved by God, rather than by man—to what is consistent with Christian profession, rather than to what may be expedient, creditable, or consistent with the usages of the world. We ought to teach children, that having done simply what was right, there is nothing, and there can be nothing, to fear; and we should teach this on the broad foundation, that the habits and customs of ten thousand worlds cannot alter one tittle of the Divine law, or make that good which is really evil.

Any one who has paid much attention to the state of society in the present day, will, I think, agree with me, that these are times in which mothers are especially called upon to teach their children, that they are acting not merely with a party for the support of a particular set of opinions, and in opposition to all who hold opinions differing in the slightest de-

gree; but as citizens of a great world, subject with all the families of earth to the same supreme Head, lovers of truth, with the Bible for their guide, and aspirants to an immortality, in which the language of universal love will exclude all reference to sect or party.

If, in our after intercourse with society, we must unavoidably attach ourselves to one party or another, in almost every thing we do; and if in such association it is almost impossible to keep our feelings unwarped by prejudice, let us at least endeavor to impress strong characters of truth upon the open and unbiased mind of youth, so that having pre-occupied the sphere of thought and feeling, by those clear facts of pre-eminent importance, respecting which mankind are not able to disagree, there may be less room left for points of minor moment, and especially for those little causes of dispute which call forth so much of the rancor and bitterness of party spirit.

It seems to me that in these important matters, the tendency of the times to obvious and immediate results, operates in an especial manner. It is not now the man who serves his Maker most faithfully, who is most looked up to by his fellow-Christians; but the man who comes forward, and gives largely, who makes speeches, or writes pamphlets, for the support of some particular set of opinions. All these are *results*—they are what can be seen and heard of men—they strike the attention, rouse into action, and give people something to do. All this kind of excitement, and this advocacy of certain parties and opinions, is particularly agreeable to the young; and could it be conducted without prejudice or animosity, might certainly be advantageous in calling their energies into exercise. But, alas! we forget, in those stirring moments, when the young spirit is fired by a high impulse to be doing something in a great and good cause—we forget the contempt which is at the same time inspired for those who are inactive, the pride which swells the bosom of the young aspirant to be foremost in the field; and, worse than all, the bitterness and the rancor which are called into

exercise against those who oppose themselves to his career, or who presume even to call in question either its wisdom or its expediency.

I have sometimes imagined a visitant from another world coming down to this, fully acquainted with the principles of the gospel upon which our religious faith is built, and knowing also that we are professed followers of that Saviour whose test of discipleship was, that we should love one another, and who bequeathed his peace as the greatest blessing he could bestow upon those who should keep his commandments. I have imagined such a being reading our public journals, but especially some of our professedly religious ones, and I have thought that the first inquiry he would make, would be, whether he had not arrived at the wrong planet? whether, in fact, he had not alighted upon fiery Mars, rather than descended into the bosom of a Christian community?

I am induced to speak of these strange anomalies in public as well as private feeling, not from any wish presumptuously to interfere with a department of human affairs which is far beyond the purpose of my present work; but I speak of these things, because they constitute too much the atmosphere in which we live, and it is my wish—my entreaty—my prayer, that children should be preserved from breathing this atmosphere sooner than is absolutely necessary. By being too early plunged into all the meanness, the littleness, and, may we not say, the sinfulness of party feeling, by seeing their parents and friends worked up to extravagance and animosity, on all those public occasions which offer exalted places to the advocates of their particular party, they lose sight of the value of those principles which *all good* men advocate, and of the supremacy of that party to which *all good* men belong.

Men are in general too deeply engaged themselves in affairs of public interest, to allow of their exercising any very beneficial influence over their children in this respect; but surely women may so far abstract their thoughts from the mere trappings and pageantry of human life, as to lead the minds

of their children along with them, in looking to its realities, and especially to its oneness of interest in the great end of existence. Much may be done in this way by a judicious mother, where subjects of sectarian interest are under discussion, to ward off the attention of the young from the extreme importance attached by persons generally to different forms of government, or modes of worship. Much may also be done by a mother to impress upon the minds of her children, that the religious sect to which their parents belong, is preferred by them, not because it is perfect in itself, or more owned by God as regards the tokens of his especial favor, but because the views and principles upon which it is founded, are most in accordance with their own, and consequently afford them more support and satisfaction than any other. Even where, as is frequently the case, they do devoutly believe that the church to which they belong is the only true church, parents ought in justice to make their children acquainted with the fact, that the members of other churches as devoutly believe the same of theirs.

I know not whether I have made my meaning clear, in describing what I believe to be the only true foundation of a strong moral character; but, in order to render more obvious the value of moral courage in our intercourse with society, I will notice a few instances in which it is brought into opposition to worldly-mindedness, and I fear they must be those in which it seldom gains the mastery.

I have already pointed out the manner in which an absence of moral courage operates against the love of truth; and it is much in the same manner that prejudices are generally imbibed—because people dare not think for themselves—because they dread the responsibility of having formed their own opinions, and feel a kind of safety in thinking as some person, or some party, thinks. If they were to form their own opinions, they would have to defend them when called in question, or to bear a certain degree of odium, when they were contemned; but if they

adopt the opinions of certain individuals, more especially if they think as all the world thinks, there is an end at once of argument—they enjoy the satisfaction of feeling themselves victorious, without being required to prove that they are so. Even when convinced of having been wrong, persons who are deficient in moral courage dare not avow their change of opinion; but go on persuading themselves against conviction, or else invent some subterfuge by which they can escape, without having the candor to make an honorable recantation.

There is an excellent maxim which all mothers ought to impress upon the minds of their children, that “to confess that you have been in the wrong, is only saying in other words, that you are wiser to-day than you were yesterday;” and where the love of truth, simply for its own sake, is the prevailing aim of a family, I cannot think that such candid confessions need be attended with any difficulty. To have discovered a mistake, is no trifling step in the path of wisdom; and when it happens to be our own, we have all the more need to rejoice at having found it out.

In such cases as these, it is chiefly, if not entirely, by moral courage, that we are helped over the little obstacles presented by vanity, obstinacy, and self-esteem. We feel the greater good of seeing and acknowledging the truth; but without moral courage, we shrink from being laughed at, or triumphed over, for not having seen it before. Yet what is all this paltriness of personal feeling, in comparison with the beauty and the majesty of truth? Children, then, should learn not only to love truth for its own sake, but to dare to uphold it, even at the risk of a banter or a sneer.

But above all other enemies to moral courage, is the world—the world in which we live—that grand master of forms and ceremonies, in whose service it is our perpetual aim to live as other people live, and to do as other people do, in order that we may not lose caste, and go down in the favor of the world. It is sometimes true that we can ill

afford such a style of living—it may be true that we are in debt—and what is more wonderful, it may also be true that we do not ourselves really value the things we are struggling to possess; but the world would forget us—we should not be visited, or, if we were, it would only be to be despised—did we dare to be singular, or regardless of these things.

“What world,” the strange visitant of earth might ask—“what world is that which occupies a place of paramount importance in almost every human heart?” “The world in which we live,” some candid voice might answer. “Nay,” the visitant would reply; “that can never be; for have we not the testimony of all mankind, from the prince down to the lowest peasant, that the world is hated, despised, regarded as a bitter enemy—at once an ingrate, and a tyrant? And certain it is, there are few human beings who can say in their hearts, that they love, and honor, though they are but too willing to obey, the world to whose bondage they submit. While reading the works of some authors, one would think indeed that the world was a perfect monster, for there is scarcely an opprobrious epithet, or an abusive charge, which has not been thrown out against it by one or another; while none have come forward to defend it, or to prove that it is really worthy of a better name.

For my own part, I have always found it a satisfactory conclusion when judging of the world, that whatever its faults or its abuses may be, it is under the superintending care of One who has the power to overrule its worst elements for good, and who knows, better than I do, what really is good. But when we make to ourselves an idol of the world, when we bow down and worship it, when we sacrifice our best feelings at its shrine, and make its laws the test of all excellence, then, indeed, it is time to cry out against the world; because then it is evident that instead of regarding it as the theatre in which we are to act for a short season of trial, the garden in which we are to labor in the service of our Heavenly Master, the field

in which we are to fight as good soldiers of Christ, we are making it our home—I was about to add, our *rest*; but never yet was rest the portion of those who made the world their home.

An extreme regard for the approval of the world, and an excessive absorption in the interests of this life, is generally called worldly-mindedness; and this it is which meets us in every path, besets the wise as well as the simple, the rich as well as the poor, and, I had almost said, the good as well as the evil. Should I have been altogether wrong, if I had? For is it not lurking in the sanctuary, when we take our places there; waiting for the minister, when he descends from his desk; busy with the congregation, as they disperse? Does it not meet us at our homes on the sabbath-day, close the door of the closet which should be entered for prayer, and finally send us to sleep with bright visions of the anticipated events or occupations of the coming week? Nor on the sabbath alone, but on every other day and night of his existence, I believe that a spirit of worldly-mindedness is that with which the Christian has to contend more frequently than with any other. I do not say that there may not be at times strong passions and dark propensities in his nature, against which he has to wage a more desperate and determined warfare; but the peculiarity of worldly-mindedness, is that it is always present, and always, under the fair colors of respectability, convenience, interest, or expediency, holding up a false standard of excellence for us to aim at.

I do not presume either to say, that moral courage alone will conquer this enemy. I think I have sufficiently explained my meaning, that moral courage, founded upon religious principle—for indeed I cannot well imagine any other—that such is the armor by which young people ought to be defended when they go forth into society, in order that they may not be induced to adopt the false standard which worldly-mindedness will ever be presenting to their view.

In the exercise of our affections, and in all

our kindly feelings, worldly-mindedness has the power to contract and harden the heart to a lamentable extent; not that we begin by preferring the claims of the world to those of kindness, but having made this a habit, having made the favor of the world our chief good, we cease, in time, to experience those warm fresh springs of generous impulse, which might so often gladden and beautify the path of life.

Let us imagine the case of a respectable family travelling at a distance from their home and friends, having fallen by some accident into circumstances of trial and distress; one of their party being dangerously ill, they are detained upon the road, and in a strange land receive the kindness of a family a little beneath themselves in outward circumstances, or, in other words, a little poorer, and less expensive in their general habits. These things, however, are little thought of by the family in trouble, because they feel themselves to be, for the time, out of the world; and under circumstances of trial and distress, they escape for a while from the thralldom of worldly-mindedness. But soon their affairs assume a more favorable aspect, and they return to their own residence, where, without riches, they make rather a showy and elegant appearance, and in short, stand well with their master, the world.

Their first impulse on returning home is to remember the friends in the strange land, whose kindness and hospitality it would indeed be impossible to forget. They are a grateful family too, and one and all have been busy on their journey planning what each could do in the way of sending some little memorial of their gratitude. Arrived at home, however, they find from the state of affairs, and from the extraordinary expenses incident to their late journey, that they are likely to be rather straitened for means during the next few weeks, and therefore the memorials must wait. Indeed all are agreed, that it will look better to send them after a little time has elapsed. It is not, however, the journey alone which has brought them to this conclusion, but a season of

gaiety being just commenced in the town where they live, there is a new satin dress to be bought for the mother, and so on, through all the members of the family, whose age entitles them to the supreme privilege of appearing well dressed in public.

In this state of things, Christmas arrives, with its never-failing demands upon the purses of householders; but still the family feel grateful, and remember, with often-expressed regret, that they have as yet done nothing towards acknowledgment of the kind services of those distant friends. Winter passes, and summer comes; but the family, living for the world, and to the extent of their income, have literally nothing to spare for the claims of gratitude; and by degrees the whole affair is forgotten, or rather thrust out of mind by the crowding in of other and more immediate objects of attention. It is not forgotten, because the family are still grateful, but it has become rather a painful subject, and therefore they never mention it.

A year or two passes in this manner, when one of the boys returning home from school, declares he has seen the youngest son of the C— family, and that they have all come to settle in the very town where the obliged family live. Here then is an opportunity at hand of showing how gratefully their kindness is remembered. No doubt they are strangers in the place. No doubt they want friends, for they were evidently rather straitened in their means. No doubt they want the countenance of some respectable and influential person, for the father was even at that time looking out for a situation. Here then is an excellent opportunity for showing what gratitude can do. Let us see how the world permits it to be used.

"Is it possible," exclaims the mother, "they can have come to live in this place?"

"I am sure it is so," replies the boy, "for little Harry told me where they live."

"And where is that?" asks the mother.

"You shall guess," replies the boy, with an arch look, as if he had an extraordinary secret to disclose.

"Perhaps in Brunswick Place?"

"No: actually!" exclaims the boy, "at No. 1, in that row of shabby houses at the back of the tallow-chandler's!"

The mother makes no remark, but the father and she exchange glances. What they say in private, or how they calculate opposing reasons for and against this family being called upon, the reader can easily imagine. Suffice it, that after a few days have passed over, the following scene takes place in the grateful family.

"Mamma," says one of the daughters, "what do you think cook told Caroline!—that the C—s absolutely live without a servant."

"Nonsense! my dear," replies the mother, "you should not listen to what the cook says."

"But it must be true," exclaims the boy who spoke before. "I am sure it must, for yesterday, as I was going to school, I just looked in at Mr. Blanchard's window, to see if he had any more of those fine French plums, when who should I see standing at the counter, but that very young lady with the large blue eyes, who used to be so kind to Harriet—I mean, who brought her the nice fruit, for they were all kind. So I watched what she was doing, and I saw her take some groceries into a little basket which she held on her arm, and then some butter; but as the butter would not go into her basket, she asked for another paper, and actually took it in her hand, in this manner. She did, indeed! mamma, and I believe some lard too." Upon which intelligence, each of the younger members of the grateful family makes a face; and there is an end of the whole matter—the C—s are not to be called upon.

Now, it does not at all follow, because this has transpired in a family, that the members of it are pleased with themselves—that they feel at ease, or can look with steadiness and satisfaction down the humble street, and directly at the door which has no servant to open it. No; I maintain that they may still be grateful, but being servants of the world, they can do all this, and feel both mean and

miserable while they do it. But I maintain also, that these are especially cases in which moral courage would preserve us from such contemptible—such culpable servitude; for what, to a person fortified by moral courage, would it be, to incur the risk of being called upon by a lady of rank at the very time when one of the C— family was present, in comparison with the certainty of acting meanly and ungratefully to those who both deserved and needed kindness?

As regards benevolence too, as well as gratitude, it is easy to point out a case in which worldly-mindedness asserts its mastery over the actions of a good man, purely from his want of moral courage. We will imagine a respectable and benevolent individual called upon by the zealous agent of some institution for the public good. The first thing asked for, is the list of the subscribers' names. The benevolent man looks carefully up and down, and then gives his money, but declines adding his name. It happens, perhaps, in this instance, as in many others, that the name of a wealthy and influential person would be of more service to the cause than any small amount of pecuniary aid; and he is consequently urged to add his name to the list, but he still refuses. He is asked whether he does not consider such an institution much needed? "Oh yes."—Whether he does not believe it to be founded on right principles, and, so far as it has been tried, well conducted? and so on.—"Yes," he approves of it altogether, and expresses his approbation in the warmest terms; but still he will not pledge himself so publicly as to give his name. In the course of a few days, the same individual is called upon again, with the list of subscribers considerably enlarged. The benevolent man glances his eye over the long columns, and this time he discovers the signature of a titled friend, a great landed proprietor in the neighborhood, and last, but not least—a minister of religion. It is enough—the benevolent man has now sufficient courage to write his name, and with that he doubles his subscription.

It would not be possible within moderate

limits, to specify the various instances occurring perpetually in social life, where moral courage may properly be opposed to worldly-mindedness; but we must not forget that important one of defending the absent when we hear them unjustly blamed, or a wrong construction put upon their actions. To defend a public character who has a strong party on his side, requires no great amount of courage, even among his enemies; but to defend the defenceless, and obscure individual, a poor relation, or an humble friend, those who have nothing distinguished or dignified about them, is a very different matter. If a friend, for instance, has done a glaringly foolish thing, written or taken up a cause which the world holds in derision; to hear that friend ridiculed and contemned, nay, literally abused, and say nothing, is the part most frequently acted by those who are deficient in moral courage; yet as a proof that the absent friend is really in secret valued, notwithstanding the adverse tide of popular opinion, no sooner is a voice lifted up in his defence, than they are delighted beyond measure; and especially if it be an influential voice, they place themselves immediately on that side of the question, and declare their opinions to have been favorable all the time.

There is also another important feature frequently displayed by the same moral weakness. It is where families or friends live in the habit of flattering each other, and never venture to speak candidly of each other's faults, except on occasions of anger, or under the influence of passion; when, all apprehension of consequences being lost sight of, there follows an outburst of injurious accusations, the more deeply wounding to the accused, because they convey the impression of having been long treasured up, and even harbored in the breast, at the very time when the most familiar and affectionate confidence appeared to prevail.

The amount of individual and social happiness thus destroyed by the work of a moment, is perhaps greater than by any other means. The confidence broken never again to be restored, the spirit wounded so as never

again to be healed, the bond of affection rent asunder never again to be united—these are among the trophies of that cruel warfare, by which a reckless and ungoverned temper may scatter ruin over the loveliest gardens of domestic happiness.

It is of the utmost importance then, that children should be taught to speak the truth to each other, not petulantly, and especially not in a taunting or triumphant manner; but tenderly, and kindly—in pity, rather than hate; and, above all, with humility, as esteeming themselves no better for having been able to point out another person's fault.

But there is a far more important class of instances yet to be noticed, and under that class what a dark catalogue is registered! I mean instances in which the most indissoluble of all earthly unions is entered into from motives of worldly-mindedness. That instances of this kind are occurring every day, is a fact too generally acknowledged to need any additional proof; and when we think that worldly-mindedness has thus the power to wrench, as it were, the heart-strings asunder, or to consign its votaries to a kind of living death, as it must before it can separate those who love, or chain together those who hate—when we think that moral courage might rescue the victims of this cruel tyranny, and snatch them from the irremediable wretchedness into which they would otherwise be plunged, surely no effort can be too great, no labor too much, to bestow upon that improvement in the state of public feeling, which is so much needed here.

Time was when parents and guardians were the parties blamed for making worldly aggrandizement their object in such alliances, rather than the happiness of the parties most immediately concerned; and the romances of the last century abound with nothing so much as those cruel impositions of authority by which the "course of true love" was made subservient to the love of gold. But though parents and guardians may still be accessory, they are not the principal agents in this particular kind of worldly traffic. Those who speculate in this market now, are those who

suffer most when the bargain is a losing one. They are the young men and young women who dare not think of marriage except where there is worldly benefit to be obtained, because they dare not meet society without being, in all outward embellishments, adorned for the occasion.

It cannot be any other kind of terror which deters from choosing where affection would direct. It cannot be a dread of personal privation. No; a young and noble-hearted man would spurn all privation in comparison with that of being forever separated from the woman he loved. It cannot be labor that he fears. That would be sweetened by affection. It is, in fact, that he wants the moral courage to begin the world with an establishment corresponding with humble means; and even if he in his own person was bold enough to deviate so far from the beaten track of custom, parents, friends, and relatives would all cry out against him, and therefore he cannot—dare not marry the portionless orphan girl, who has, perhaps, no other friend or protector in the world besides himself. Therefore—and here is the worst feature in the case—he enters into a heartless, joyless alliance with one, whose money purchases for him an establishment, and a place in society, while the world exults over him, as having made an excellent match.

But for one instance of this kind occurring among men, I believe there are twenty among women, of marriages entered into chiefly, if not entirely, from the dread of being old maids. I do not mean that the mere title of old maid constitutes the *whole* of the evil so much dreaded; but in connection with a single state, there are often consequences to be apprehended by women, which it requires moral courage in no trifling degree to meet calmly.

Hundreds upon hundreds of families respectably brought up, and holding a high place in society, from living to the extent of their means, have little to support that respectability in the opinion of the world, when the original establishment is broken up, and each member is thrown upon their own share. It

is then that a lone woman is lonely indeed. Perhaps she has enough to support her in decent lodgings, but she has been accustomed to invite her friends to a hospitable board, to be waited upon by her father's servants, and to be somebody in his house; how then is she to settle down as a mere spinster in lodgings!—too poor to give a party, and perhaps too proud to visit where she can no longer be looked upon in society as she was before? After having been accustomed to a large family, and a comfortable home, it requires more moral courage than most people are aware of, for a woman to live alone in humble lodgings, and yet feel neither dissatisfied nor degraded.

The exercise of moral courage, however, would help them over all this. It would stir them up perhaps to some useful and profitable employment, by which their time and talents would be occupied, their melancholy thoughts dispersed, and their moral dignity maintained. It would send them forth into society again wherever they were admitted, feeling themselves denizens of a great world, as free to think and act as the monarch on his throne; while, disregarding the paltriness of personal feeling, they would escape many a rankling wound, to which others are subjected, and find many a healthy and natural channel through which to pour their benevolence into the great treasury of human kindness.

There is a far worse aspect of the case, however, than this, and that is, where the daughters of a family are left wholly unprovided for, and when on the death of their parents, they are obliged to go out into the world to provide for themselves. Why this should be so great a calamity as it is, belongs not to this portion of my work to examine; but there is great room to fear that this particular aspect of human affairs, is the means of frightening too many weak-minded women into unhappy marriages.

I confess I am no advocate for mere love-matches, made without *any* regard to worldly prudence; because our young people, and particularly our young women, must be very

differently educated from what they are, before such a course of action could be any thing but rash and ruinous in the extreme. Living as too many do for the world, the young people of the present day are ill calculated indeed to meet such consequences as would involve them in a loss of the world's esteem. Admiring as we do, and regarding as our chief good, those things which money alone can procure, how is it possible that happiness should be found in an ill-furnished home, even though love might for a while adorn it with roses? No; society must be very differently constituted from what it is, to admit of the heart and the affections having free exercise in fixing the marriage tie. But if ever there should come a time when the first flow of youth's best love shall be more esteemed than a fashionable appearance; when to feel that there is one being in the world whose very life is bound up with ours, and to be always near that being shall be more thought of than to sit at the tables of the great; when an humble meal, prepared by the hand of affection, shall be considered sweeter than the luxuries of the epicure; then may we hail the dawn of a fresh era of happiness—the commencement of a new moral existence to the sons and daughters of our land.

It is chiefly on the part of mothers, that we so much want some fresh effort to bring forward such an era, to induce young people to look away from the trivial things of the moment, onward to some greater and more lasting good. How strange that we should have to point out to them, that one considerable portion of that good, is the exercise of their affections in the lot to which they consign themselves for life! Yet so it is. Such is the influence of an unhealthy atmosphere, that the taste becomes vitiated, and a preference at last is given to what is neither agreeable in itself, nor beneficial in its use; and such too frequently is the effect of breathing only the atmosphere of this world.

It may be said, however, with regard to worldly-minded persons, that whatever is most esteemed by the world, is what they

believe to be best for them; and that, seeking material excellence as their chief good, they have in reality their heart's desire. It is true they have it, but do they enjoy it? or rather—for that is the question—do they enjoy it to the highest degree in which they are capable of enjoying any thing? That they do to a certain extent enjoy what they possess, I am not prepared to dispute, because we have on every hand strong outward evidence of the extreme satisfaction felt on being more elegantly dressed, better equipped, and altogether in greater favor with the world, than our neighbors are; and I ask not, for I dare not ask, how often such enjoyment is only an escape from misery; how often the secret soul rebels against its bondage, and returns to its early and voluntary allegiance; or how often persons thus situated endeavor to be contented with what they are, because it is too late to aspire to be what they might have been.

We must not forget that there is a spirit at work among the affairs of men, who has been appropriately represented as saying—

“ Evil, be thou my good :”

and when we fix our ideas of excellence upon low and trivial things, because we have not moral courage to look beyond the narrow prejudices of society; when we dare not pursue that as good, which would really be so to us, because it is not sanctioned by the approbation of the world; we are in reality perverting the moral order of the universe, and frustrating the gracious designs of Providence, in giving us higher capabilities for happiness than we choose to exercise.

Nor is there any need for mothers to be discouraged in this great and good work, although the voice of society should sometimes be raised against their efforts. They have unquestionably a right to train up their children in that way which appears to them most conducive to real happiness; and if, among conflicting opinions, they are not always able to see clearly the direct point at which to aim, let them remember this simple rule: All those sources of enjoyment which

call forth such faculties and emotions as we are taught by the Scriptures to believe will constitute part of the enjoyments of heaven, must be worthy of cultivation in a state of existence which ought to be a preparation for a happy eternity; while all those sources of enjoyment which call forth faculties limited in their exercise to this world alone, must be of an inferior nature, and worthy only of a much lower portion of regard.

It is then to this ultimate and superior good that mothers should teach their children to look, and at the same time so fortify their minds by moral courage, that they shall dare to choose it in preference to the inferior, even though the world in general may condemn their choice.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL DUTIES OF A MOTHER.

IN pursuing the course of observations which have thus far occupied our attention, much has already been said upon the importance of keeping the moral atmosphere of home in a healthy state, and perhaps too little in relation to the bodily health of children; yet how many of the sufferings of later life might be traced to neglect of this kind, or perhaps to mistaken tenderness, rather than neglect!

To be always pleasing children, always gratifying their appetites, always giving them something nice, appears to be the ruling passion with some indulgent mothers, forgetful of the fact, that this is the certain means of keeping up a very unnatural and unhealthy state both of mind and body. Yet it is astonishing how far a small allowance of sweets may be made to go, in the way of giving pleasure, if carefully husbanded, and judiciously dealt out; while a constant revelling among good things has invariably the effect of injuring the temper, as well as the stomach.

Whether owing to the climate of England, or some peculiarity in our habits and consti-

tutions, it is not my business here to inquire, but there certainly exists among English people something unfavorable to the healthy action of the digestive powers; and hence follows a long catalogue of uncomfortable sensations, scarcely to be classed under the head of disease, which beset the mind as well as the body, and assail most effectually what are called the animal spirits. In the management of children, it is consequently of the utmost importance that attention should be directed to this peculiarity of English constitutions, for of all maladies, those which overwhelm the mind with causeless apprehensions, weaken the resolution, and render the temper irritable, are the most to be dreaded.

Children who are always eating, though they eat but little at a time, are almost always ill-tempered; because there is a constant state of excitement kept up, which effectually destroys the healthy tone of the mind; and while they make themselves and everybody near them uncomfortable, they are perpetually seeking to allay the craving of a diseased appetite, by urgent applications for some fresh indulgence, which is granted them at least as often for peace' sake, as for love. Occasionally, with such children, the excessive excitement under which they labor, assumes the character of fever and illness. The doctor is then sent for. Medicines disguised in every possible way, and powders wrapped up in every imaginable confection, are administered; and as the patient recovers, the old habits by degrees are resumed, with the addition of more good things to tempt a weak appetite, and greater frequency of food to supply the strength which has been lost.

Now, if mothers could but be made to try it, I believe they would invariably find, that a certain number of meals, consisting of plain food, at regular intervals every day, with nothing between, would make their children both healthier, happier, and better tempered, than all the good things they are in the habit of administering; to say nothing of the beneficial effect upon their future lives, which would be likely to ensue from a system of diet calculated to place them above the de-

grading slavery of mere animal appetite. With regard to sweets, too, if they are given out sparingly at certain hours of the day, and never at any other—never when cried for, nor even to cure a cut finger, or a bruised knee, they will give incalculably more real gratification, because they will require no teasing for, and, being sure to be given out at a certain time, can occasion no disappointment.

Those constant teasings on the part of children, which we hear in some families, those half refusals on the part of the mother, and those ungracious givings at last, because teased out of patience, though ruinous alike to peace and temper, are perhaps of all domestic evils the most easily prevented; because habit does so much with children, that if they have never been accustomed to eat between meals, and have never had sweets given them except at certain times, they will no more fret themselves to obtain such indulgences, than they will cry because the sun does not rise in the night.

Next in importance to regularity and moderation in diet, is exercise in the open air; and, as often as it can be obtained, the free wild exercise of country life, even at the risk of torn dresses, crushed bonnets, and soiled shoes; all of which articles, however, should be provided of such a nature as to create no very poignant distress when they happen to be a little worse for being worn.

It is not the mere *air*, nor the mere *exercise*, though both are good, which produces the whole of the benefit derived by children from country sports. It is the immense variety of situations in which they may be placed, which gives them an energy, a fertility of resource, and, above all, a courage and self-possession, extremely difficult to acquire in the limited range of town amusements. In the country, too, children may try their skill, their adroitness, and their activity in a thousand ways, which would be neither safe nor suitable in a town; and therefore it is, that children, brought up in the country, though sometimes appearing ignorant as regards the technicalities of polished life, have often

within themselves a fund of resource which helps them over innumerable difficulties, and a fund of amusement, too, which supplies them with perpetual cheerfulness.

As soon as children are old enough to ride with safety, horse-exercise affords one of the most exhilarating and delightful amusements of the country. Let them learn to ride without fear, to accommodate themselves to the different movements of their pony, so as not to be thrown up into the air, to drop down again like a dead weight; and let them learn, too, what to do on the instant when a horse starts, rears, or strikes off into a gallop; and they will then have learned, besides the art of riding, a great deal that will be serviceable to them in after life.

But they should learn, in addition to the art of riding, the nature and habits of the horse. So noble, sagacious, and beautiful an animal, is well worthy of their study. They should be instructed in its muscular construction, and especially the wonderful adaptation of its feet and legs to the purposes in which it is rendered so serviceable to man; and they should also learn the action and the use of the bridle, with all the other trappings and accoutrements of a horse, so that in case of accident, such as the turning of a saddle, or the breaking of a rein, they need not give themselves up to useless terror, but set about doing the right thing at the right time.

I mention more particularly these apparently trivial things, because I am convinced there is not sufficient use made, in the education of children, of such common means of exciting interest, and conveying information at the same time; and because it is not in the act of riding alone, but throughout the whole training of children, that too little pains are taken to make them thoroughly acquainted with what they are about. As a mere dead lesson taught in a close school-room, it is probable that the mind of a child would with difficulty be made to receive any lasting or correct idea of the character of a horse; but on a clear fresh morning in the country, while riding by the side of a kind and intelligent father, every thing told to a child about

the lively little animal, which carries it along so cheerfully, pricking its ears at every movement in the hawthorn hedge, keeping pace with its more majestic companion, and determined not to be outdone, either in a light gallop over the rebounding turf, or a leap over the little brook which crosses the way—every thing told to a child about a creature so intensely interesting as its own pony, is sure to be listened to and remembered. Nor is it in the act of riding it alone that the child finds delight. There is the fetching it up out of the field, and the merry turning out—a sight worth seeing both by old and young; for what can be more graceful than the light movements and free play of a high-spirited and beautiful horse?

But we must not leave this subject without reminding the mother, that it is one which demands her peculiar care, as regards her boys. It is a generally acknowledged fact, that the class of men whose business consists in the training and management of horses are among the last whose society a prudent mother would choose for her sons. If, therefore, the father, or other members of the family, cannot take charge of this department in the education of children, it would be better a thousand times that they should never learn to ride, than learn this delightful art at the risk of association with grooms and stable-boys. Indeed, the first symptom which develops itself in a boy, of a tendency to the swagger of jockeyship, ought to be regarded with the most serious apprehensions; for how many instances does the dark catalogue of crime afford, of hopeful youths led astray in the first instance by their taste for the stable and the turf, whose career in the end has been most degraded and ruinous!

With regard to the exercise of riding, then, as well as with a vast number of other amusements, which may under certain circumstances be rendered not only lawful but beneficial to young people, this rule ought to be observed—that unless the parents, or friends whom they depute in their stead, can take the whole matter into their own hands, the amusement itself should not be thought

of; and this rule I believe will hold good with regard to visiting, reading, and a variety of other things, which may or may not be objectionable, according to the associations with which they are accompanied. There are many books, for instance, which parents may occasionally read to children with safety, accompanied by their own observations, but which, if read alone and in secret, would produce a very different impression upon the youthful mind. If, therefore, I repeat, parents cannot, or will not, take the whole conduct and responsibility of these indulgences into their own hands, they had infinitely better narrow the sphere of their children's amusements than allow them to be enjoyed at so great a risk.

In speaking of the books to be allowed or forbidden in a family, I do not feel myself called upon to lay down, or even to suggest, any rule. Indeed, it would appear to me a little too much like presumption to dictate on a point of duty belonging so exclusively to the decision of parents, and depending so entirely upon their individual views and habits. So far as may be practicable, I should wish more particularly to direct the attention of the reader to those points of duty which are too little thought of, but upon which all who think seriously and impartially are agreed. Under this class we may safely place the rule, that nothing should be done clandestinely in a family—that there should be such a feeling of confidence inspired by the parents, and such habits of freedom and candor encouraged among their children, as would tend very much to do away with all temptation to deceive.

In order to effect this, however, there must be considerable allowance made for the difference betwixt youth and age. We should never forget that the one is going up the hill, the other down—the one looking out from the windows of the soul upon an untried world; the other returning, weary of that world, to the retirement of the soul again. There should be great allowance made also, for the progressive changes in society, for the spread of intelligence, the expansion of thought, and

the gradual advance of intellectual attainments in every walk of life.

We have long since passed that stage of civilization in which safety was regarded as consisting in narrowing up the mind of youth, and it is our business now, to find out how safety may be made consistent with expansion. In the first place, I should say, by clear, honorable, and straight-forward treatment at home. There should be no deception on the part of the mother, no false excuses even to obtain a good end, no calling hard things by soft names, or other modes of practising upon the credulity of childhood. Even in cases of illness, let medicine be medicine, though wrapped up in jelly; and do not pretend when it has to be administered, that you are offering only a delicious treat. A well-managed child, accustomed to habits of implicit obedience, will take its medicine knowing what it is, simply because it must be taken, and because it believes that its mother will not require it to do any thing contrary to its real good; while the child at first deceived into the belief that what is offered is only currant-jelly, will in all probability detect the trick, and ever afterwards exhibit a ten-fold strength of determination to resist.

But even where such practices are not discovered by the child, there is a moral meanness on the part of the mother, in making such a system the rule of her conduct towards her family. If she is truly beloved and esteemed, she will have influence enough to enforce a direct obedience to her wishes, and in case of resistance, she will have sufficient authority to command.

In all families there will necessarily be the occurrence of circumstances, or subjects of discussion, with which the junior members cannot with propriety be made acquainted. These, however, are such as require no deception to conceal, because there is no necessity for their being talked about, or even hinted at, before children. Nothing is more common with mothers than to send their children out of the way on false pretences—to go and play in the garden, or to see what the nurse is doing, when in reality their ab-

sence is all that is desired. To a noble and generous nature, there is something revolting in this mode of treatment ; and I feel assured that all children accustomed to look to a high moral standard, would be better and happier to be sent out of the room every day because their parents wished to talk about something not suitable for them to hear, than once to detect those parents in having got rid of them by a false pretence.

In these, as well as all other cases in which they could understand it, children should be admitted to know the very heart of their mother. They should not be left by chance to discover that they have been intruding upon her privacy, and that because she thought them too selfish and unreasonable to bear to know the truth, she invented a pretext for getting rid of their company without offending their vanity. Such discoveries, whether made by the young or the old, have invariably the effect of destroying confidence, and estranging affection. Every thing, then, which tends to destroy that open, generous, upright spirit, which ought to pervade the atmosphere of home, is as much to be feared, as that which leads into more obvious and direct evil ; because it operates upon the moral constitution of children, and consequently tells upon their future lives.

In the formation of character it makes an immense difference, whether we aim at what is great, or what is little. There is a feebleness of resolution, a littleness of purpose, and a puerility of character altogether, which may be both amiable and respectable in its way, but it must ever be in a small way ; and while I should be sorry indeed to recommend any thing likely to be destructive to simplicity, I feel convinced in my own mind, that true nobility of character will always be found associated with a certain degree of simplicity of heart.

Eagerness to obtain immediate gratification, to snatch at individual good, and to reap the harvest as soon as the seed is sown, is not only the characteristic of childhood, but of all stages of life, with those who never attain a moral dignity beyond that of chil-

dren. To prove that the possession of an expected pleasure does not really do good, or that the privation of it does not really do harm, is a part of the discipline exercised by Divine wisdom. It is a lesson we all have to learn, and the sooner the better ; for having learned this lesson, the eagerness of what may be called an appetite for pleasure is allayed, and the mind is enabled to stretch onward to that greater good, which, in so many instances, can only be obtained by intermediate suffering and endurance.

Patient waiting for a long-expected issue, with unabated efforts steadily directed to one point, an eye fixed intently upon one object of attainment, and not diverted by intervening things—these all belong to true greatness of character ; and they are more especially worthy of our attention, as forming parts of the Christian character too ; for where would be the exercise of faith, if *things hoped for* were immediately seen ?

In the formation of a noble, and even of a useful character, great importance should be attached to the keeping of a promise, but great regard should also be paid to the act of forming it. Some persons think they have resolved, when they have merely said to themselves they will do a thing ; and others again, think they have resolved, when they have made no calculation of the difficulties to be encountered. In order to keep our resolution firm and inviolate, we should not play with it. We should not use it hastily, or often, but rather keep it in reserve, as a sacred power with which we are invested, and which it would be an abuse of one of the best gifts of God to man, to trifle with, weaken, or destroy.

Children especially should be taught to think well before they resolve ; but having formed a resolution, they ought to be encouraged by all means to keep it. All promises should also be scrupulously kept *with* them, even at the cost of some annoyance to their parents or friends. It is related of Lord Chatham, that having promised his son to see the pulling down of a garden wall, he happened to forget this promise, and had it pulled down

in his absence. Yet so strong was his feeling of the importance of what he had done, that he ordered his workmen to build up the wall again, in order that his son might witness the downfall he had anticipated with so much interest.

It seems strange that all the world should concur in admiring a character of spotless integrity, and yet take so little pains to maintain it in the young, when we know that every deviation from the direct line of rectitude on the part of parents, must necessarily tend to obscure that line in the minds of their children, who look up to them as examples, and who are more influenced by the general conduct of those with whom they associate, than by the force of argument or the persuasion of eloquence. The manner in which they are treated, then, should be firm, upright, and clear. There should be no confusion of contending motives; no aiming at one thing, and pretending to aim at another.—Even in reasoning with them, things should be spoken of as they are, not merely as their parents wish them to be.

It is astonishing how far some well-meaning persons seem to think they can stretch the credulity of youth by representing the allurements of the world as no allurements at all. When it was so much the fashion to admire Lord Byron that young people scarcely admired any other author, many good persons, without the least talent for criticism, felt it their duty to depreciate him as a poet; while perhaps the very individuals they addressed had their minds so imbued with the true spirit of poetry as to feel their understandings insulted at the same time that their taste was offended, by a mode of reasoning from data so evidently false.

It is thus with much that is too pleasing in the world. We wish it was otherwise; but since it is pleasing, and especially so to youth, we gain nothing by denying the fact, or by speaking in disparaging terms of what is really the very thing they most desire. There must, with children, and with all in whose feelings we wish to produce a radical change, be a certain kind of meeting half way,

a candid acknowledgment of the truth, so far as it goes, even when most opposed to our wishes; or by what means are they to be made to believe, that we enter so far into their feelings as to sympathize with them, and so far into the case itself as to understand it?

Towards the support of true dignity of character, many things are required, which would not, on first looking at the subject, appear to be at all essential. Among these I would class a habit which ought to be made part of the education of children—that of always speaking and behaving well at home. Two sets of manners, one for the home circle, and one for the circle of society to which they are occasionally admitted, are sure to produce the effect of making a character only half what it ought to be. It is as easy to learn to speak well, as to speak otherwise; and where the language of the fireside is always correct, there can be no danger of being guilty of vulgarisms on public occasions.

We are too apt to confuse the two ideas of good society, and society above us. It is in the power of all united and intelligent families, to make their own society good, by adopting such habits and manners at home, as they would wish to be distinguished by abroad. By never having indulged in vulgar habits, or made use of a phraseology unfitted for the best society, and by never having been accustomed to blunt or awkward manners, a young person will be spared the suffering of much of that shyness and embarrassment, which are the painful experience of those who only behave well when they go into company; and who thus lay themselves open to the suspicion of acting a part which is foreign to their feelings; at the same time that they reveal the secret of an absence of good breeding in their homes and families.

There are persons, however, whose behavior is pleasant and obliging enough to their equals, whether at home or abroad, yet to those whom they consider their inferiors, the very reverse; so that the very fact of any one with whom they have to communicate, being poor, ill-dressed, or in a dependent situation, seems to justify them in laying aside

entirely their good manners. The less, then, that children are allowed to consider good manners as something apart from themselves, something put on for a purpose or an occasion, to be laid aside when no longer needed, the more likely they will be to act consistently in an amiable and obliging manner; and if carefully taught by their parents that they have no more right to be rude to one class of persons, than to another, they will be preserved from much that is objectionable in the conduct of ill-bred families. In this, however, as in so many other instances, the mother's whole character, her daily and hourly conduct, and the moral atmosphere in which her children live, will operate more advantageously than all her arguments, or even her entreaties.

If, in the first place, mothers are careful in the choice of their servants, and faithful in the discharge of their duty towards them, they will experience neither difficulty nor danger in studiously inculcating towards them a kind and respectful behavior on the part of their children; and especially that consideration which is always due to those who spend their lives in laboring for our comfort and convenience, with no other reward than their necessary food and clothing. The easy manner in which servants are got rid of, and their places supplied by others; but more particularly the manner in which they are too frequently spoken of, sometimes as necessary evils, and sometimes as parties infinitely obliged by our permitting them to work for us; the patient subserviency of this class of persons, their willingness to serve us, and the uncomplaining manner in which they carry on the drudgery of every day, all tend to impress the minds of children with an idea, that it is but a matter of course, what people are born to, and therefore worthy of no sort of consideration, that servants should labor all their lives, and that we should enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Although one would scarcely venture to recommend so deplorable an expedient, as that a household should be without servants for a week, or a month, in order to inspire a

higher sense of their value; yet there are innumerable methods, which ought not to be neglected, of teaching children that they are under an obligation to respectable and obliging servants, which nothing can so well repay, as to convince them, by our behavior, that we perpetually bear in mind, not only what may add to their comfort and convenience, but also what may make their hard lot harder than it is; and this can be shown in so many pleasant ways, without being too familiar, that one would almost suppose the mistress of a house, herself a well-bred woman, would consider it an essential part of good manners, that her children should be well-behaved and considerate towards servants, as well as towards persons in their own sphere of life.

Above all things degrading to the moral dignity of a family, is a practice not uncommon with a certain class of women, though happily a small one, of encouraging their children to watch the habits of servants, and tell tales out of the kitchen. All well-regulated families constitute one party, the servants as much bound to the interests of their master and mistress, as the higher members of the household are to those of the lower; and no sooner is a system of espionage established, and a habit acquired of acting for one party in the establishment *against* another, than the fall predicted of the house divided against itself, may with certainty be anticipated. Children, in fact, should never be made partisans in any thing. Whatever our own prejudices, or even suspicions, may be, their minds should be left unbiassed, except so far as relates to actual facts; and where facts are unfavorable on the part of servants, the sooner such servants are got rid of the better, even though in some respects they may be suited exactly to our particular purpose.

But at the same time that it is highly desirable for children to be effectually prevented from assuming a premature lordship and dominion over servants, and more especially from regarding as unworthy of consideration all which relates to their comfort and accom-

modation ; they ought, on the other hand, to be carefully guarded against making themselves a party *with* servants, either in obtaining their own ends in opposition to their parents, or serving the selfish purposes of servants in any other way. All symptoms of the society of this class of persons being a favorite indulgence to the young, is an omen of danger which ought not to be disregarded ; and above every thing they should be kept away from their bed-rooms, as well as from every other place where servants are privileged to carry on their own peculiar style of conversation, unrestrained by any fear of intrusion.

With every possible allowance for the defective education of this class of persons, and with the highest esteem for the general character of a truly respectable servant, I still think that the best of them are too much under the influence of false and limited views of things in general, to admit of their being desirable companions for children in their moments of unrestrained confidence. But when we speak of those who are not the best, especially of those artful and unprincipled characters who endeavor to work their way by flattering the vanity, or falling in with the wrong feelings of their superiors, it is impossible to express too strongly the sense which all reasonable persons must entertain, of the dangerous consequences likely to ensue from association with such individuals, even in the nursery, where the influence of the mother might be supposed most likely to impose a certain degree of restraint.

What shall we say, however, where the mother is a party implicated, and where the habit of telling depreciating stories of other people's children, is made a means of gaining favor, at the same time that it must awaken in the minds of the young, the worst feelings of human nature—envy, and jealousy of those above them, and contempt for those whom they imagine to be beneath ? For, independently of the false ideas of merit which are thus affixed to their notions of fine dresses, and personal beauty, abundant supplies of money, and other considerations of merely

casual and inferior importance, the calling into operation by such means a contemptuous or bitter feeling towards their fellow-creatures, is, perhaps, the greatest injury which it is in the power of a mother to inflict upon her children. Yet how often in the mere momentary pastime of the nursery, do mothers and nurses wield these fatal weapons, so deadly in the warfare they wage against human happiness ! How often does the vulgar observation, that Miss C— is beautifully dressed, but does not become her dress so well as Miss B—, awaken calculations of low rivalry, and thoughts inimical to all nobility of feeling in the breast of a young listener, who pines to be out-shining a neighbor's child, where she is foolishly led to believe that her triumph would be complete !

It seems to be our business here to look only at the dark side of human nature, but there is yet another feature in the moral training of the nursery, to which allusion must be made. I have thus far said little of the position which a father holds in his family, yet this I believe it will always be in the power of the mother to render exalted and dignified, or directly the reverse. We have all heard of such a thing—perhaps some of us have seen it—as a mother making a party with her children to oppose the wishes or authority of their father. We have heard of secret cabals in the nursery, and little deceptions practised in the parlor, and hints given, and expressive looks exchanged, and little speeches made, which had been planned beforehand to produce a particular effect—and of all this being made to constitute a system of behavior by which a father was to be duped by his own children, and his *wife* ! And painful as it is to believe that meanness so degrading should be found to exist on the part of women, there is but too much reason to fear, that from the absence of clear views, and sound principles, from having had recourse to artifice, to make the domestic machine move smoothly, and from having once fallen into a low and grovelling mode of conduct in little things, an approach to this system, if not actually the

extreme of it, is practised on the part of many women, whose feelings would revolt from the base and unqualified idea of acting ungenerously towards their husbands, and their children, at the same time.

There are many persons who will serve us personally to the utmost of their power, who will not be faithful to us. There are many who will wait upon us when we are ill, who scruple not to make one of a party against us. There are many who spend their strength in adding to our bodily enjoyments, who will not guard our moral dignity, nor preserve us from mental suffering. There are many women who love their husbands, and do not honor them—perhaps some who cannot; and such women never know the whole of the difficulties of their lot, until they have children to bring up, and to instruct in their filial duties. But still even in these cases, there is much that a faithful wife may do towards establishing a right feeling betwixt her husband and her children, by screening his faults from observation; and where they are too obvious for concealment, by speaking of them with pity, rather than with blame; by dwelling with tenderness and constancy upon those features in his character which present a more favorable aspect; and by setting an example of giving honor where honor is due, simply because it has pleased the Allwise Disposer of human events, to place her and her children in an inferior situation as regards their father.

It must be granted, however, that there are cases in which men *will not* be dignified and influential in their own families, nor can anybody make them so; and where also, with great propriety, they give up their share in the management of their children entirely to the mother. Yet here again, a right-minded woman, possessed of tact and delicacy of feeling, will so exercise her delegated authority, as that it shall appear to her children to be willingly conceded on the part of her husband, and not possessed by her as an unquestionable right.

But there are even worse cases than these, where parents cannot agree in their ideas of what is best for their children; and without

presuming to interfere where no third party has any right to meddle, I can only urge upon the mother thus situated, never to allow disputes betwixt her and her husband to take place before other members of the family—never to allow them even to suppose that such disputes do arise to disturb the secret current of domestic happiness.

So much has been said by writers of every description upon the depth and the tenderness of maternal love, that to enlarge upon such a theme would be only to echo the sentiments of every human heart. But we must not forget, that while wholly given up to this feeling, so sacred in itself, there is such a thing as neglecting, for the sake of the luxury it affords, the duty of a wife. Yes; there is such a thing as forgetting when the father returns home, that it ought to be to a scene of order, harmony, and comfort. There is such a thing as forgetting, that the personal beauty, the neatness, and the grace which first charmed his fancy, gives place to a meager substitute for him, in the forlornness, and neglect of the devoted nurse. There is such a thing as forgetting, that however interesting children may be, they ought never to occupy the attention of their mother, to the exclusion of their father, or his affairs. It is true, that unlike them, he is competent to manage his affairs himself; but it deserves no milder name than cruelty, when a father is made to feel jealous of his own children—when that love, which in the first instance was solemnly and tenderly pledged to support and comfort him for life, is thus unnecessarily torn from its allegiance, to be concentrated where he has at least an equal right to share in the benefits it is calculated to bestow upon all, without diminishing the share of any.

It is possible even to love in a selfish manner. Whenever the heart is fixed upon one object, to the exclusion of all others, affection partakes of this character; and wherever a mother thus doats upon her children, she is guilty of an act of unfaithfulness to her husband, at the same time that she places herself in a perilous position, from whence the first shock of disease, or the first symptom of in-

gratitude, may cast her down into utter wretchedness.

We must endeavor then to make our affections, as well as our talents, answer the ends for which they were designed by a wise and merciful Creator. They must not be narrowed up so as to contract those streams of benevolence so much needed in a state of vicissitude like our present life; nor must they be concentrated into one focus, so as to burn with dangerous and destructive intensity. This kind of love is one which neither gives, nor receives, the happiness for which love was designed. It is in fact only a species of refined selfishness, not less requiring in its demands, than it is jealous of offence, and quick to be revenged, whenever the interests of the beloved one are supposed to be invaded.

The nature of true affection is diffusive and benevolent. It possesses the rare property of not being expended by exercise, nor weakened by expansion; and the mother who, as a Christian woman, loves supremely the highest object of all affection, who lives in charity with the whole human race, who loves her country and her kindred because they are such, and who feels that every member of the great family of earth has a claim upon her sympathy and her kindness, is not more likely to

“forget the child

That smiled so sweetly on her knee,”

than if she loved that child alone, and, for its sake, excluded from her bosom all feeling of sympathy and affection for every other creature in the world.

CHAPTER IX.

HINTS ON EDUCATION.

It has been said by Miss Hamilton, that “to be truly estimable in the eyes of her offspring, a mother should be capable of educating them herself;” and certainly where this is the case, the mistress of a household gains much in her influence over the junior members. Yet there is too much reason to fear

it would be a hopeless task with mothers in general, to attempt to persuade them to undertake, more frequently than they do, the practical part of the education of their children; to set apart one hour, and no more, for the reception of morning calls; and if one of the two departments must be given up, to leave the kitchen rather than the school-room, to the management of those less interested than themselves, in what will be the result of the operations there carried on.

To such as may be disposed to turn the exercise of their talents into this natural and suitable channel, there is one encouraging circumstance ever to be borne in mind, and that is, the incomparable advantages possessed by a mother over other teachers, in the intellectual as well as the moral education of her children. In this respect the concentration of a mother's interest in one point, and the constancy of her endeavors to attain it through a length of time which has no definite termination, place her in a situation highly favorable for undertaking the education of her children; and if, in some respects, she may be less qualified than others, whose services may be obtained by paying for them, surely a mother's love, a mother's watchfulness, and a mother's earnest zeal for the good of her children, might weigh in the balance against a little extra Latin or Greek.

There is one circumstance also, on the other side of the question, which ought to be noticed, though by no means unkindly, as regards the hired teacher, who looks very naturally to an immediate result—to as much credit as can possibly be obtained by the education or training of one set of pupils, expecting always to have to pass on to another set; while the mother knows that in her own family centres all her duty, and if rightly discharged there, her reward will be sure. To the hired teacher, each particular child, even the only one in a family, and the pride of its mother's heart, constitutes but one article in the general business of life, to be treated like hundreds of others, turned over, and disposed of, as creditably as time and circumstances will allow. Even to a serious-

mindful and strictly conscientious teacher, deeply sensible of the responsibilities attendant upon the education of youth, such a child is but one among the many, perhaps neither attractive nor interesting in itself, and sometimes requiring the utmost stretch of patience and forbearance to exercise towards it common justice. Where such, then, is all the feeling this child is capable of inspiring towards itself, surely the mother's love, and the mother's care, must be needed to carry on its education to the best advantage, so that it shall neither be overlooked, despised, nor set aside as unworthy of the attention which it is often so much more pleasant to bestow upon others.

And here I would wish to whisper into the ear of partial mothers, if I could without offending them, that the child which they esteem both beautiful and attractive, is often neither the one nor the other to an impartial observer; that the raptures which are expressed by the company around the dinner-table, when the little darling is introduced with the dessert, are no sort of proof that the object of them is really charming in itself; and that one half of those apparently interested inquirers, who ask about its age, its teeth, its walking, and its peculiar habits, and who declare that in all these particulars it surpasses any other child they know, or at least all the children of their mutual friends, would say pretty much the same, if the heir of the house should appear toothless, bald, and shrivelled, and with every feature of his face distorted. I speak of only half the indiscriminate admirers of children, when I venture upon these remarks; and when we recollect that the other half do really admire them, from the impulse which nature has kindly given to so many human hearts, and without the slightest reference to individual charms—when we recollect that there are persons who can scarcely pass a baby in the street without an inclination to embrace it, there is little indeed left for the fond mother to build her faith upon, in the flattering reception with which her child is welcomed by her guests.

I believe all mothers are sensible of the absurdity of flattery thus bestowed upon the children of their neighbors, and there are many quick-sighted and impartial enough to detect it when bestowed upon their own; but, alas! there are others, who forget, at the very moment they should remember, that their lengthy and minute details of the affairs of the nursery, are calculated only for those moments of confidential intercourse, in which the ear of true friendship is not too severely tried by listening, and in which friendship, indeed, would not deserve the name, if it could not cordially enter into all the minutiae of what must naturally be so near the mother's heart.

Making all due allowance, then, for the darling of the family being but an ordinary child, to those who look upon it with impartial eyes, we must leave the question of home-education to the conscience and the feelings of parents, assured that this important question must ever be subject to an endless variety of considerations, such as the individuals concerned can only take into account; and since there are occasionally instances of weak and injudicious mothers, fathers whose example is a hindrance to the progress of good education, houses in which neither order nor regularity can be found, and families in which the world may be said to be their household god, we ought to be thankful that there are public schools to which children can be sent, and teachers to be met with, whose laborious and faithful exertions are but ill requited by the small and grudging pittance usually offered as the reward of their labors.

In the choice of a school, or of any other mode of education, mothers should be especially careful to be clear in their own views, as to what it is they are aiming at in the education of their children; and as this work is addressed particularly to individuals in the middle class of society, I would urge upon them the importance of remembering, that one great aim in the education of this class of persons in England, should be to dignify the sphere of life to which they belong, not to creep up into another.

We are often told that a liberal education

is wanted ; but we do not always understand what is meant by this—whether an education liberally paid for, or an education conducted upon liberal principles. If the latter, we must bear in mind, that the great enemy to liberal education is prejudice ; and that there are school prejudices—may I not venture to say college prejudices also ?—as well as the prejudices of home.

Again, we hear of a genteel education being wanted ; and when this is not likely to be acquired at home, we cannot wonder at some pains being taken to procure it abroad ; but I own I have wondered that mothers thus situated, should choose for their daughters, perhaps raw girls from the country, those high seminaries in town, of which it is said, by way of recommendation, that none besides children of the highest classes are admitted, and where the expenses are beyond the reach of common people. I have wondered, because in the first place, what must be the sufferings of an awkward, ignorant, and timid girl, when placed in such a situation ? and in the second, after being drilled into the different ceremonies of polite education, after having acquired a taste for fashionable habits, and a love for all that belongs to aristocratic life, what must be her difficulties on again returning to a home, where the remembrance of these things can only be revived by the perusal of court calendars and novels ?

But we are told—and here the subject assumes a more serious character—that a religious education is wanted ; and certainly where one or both the parents of a family are themselves deficient in religious knowledge, but especially where they are defective in religious principle, where, for instance, the father is a man whose conduct and conversation are such as to render the atmosphere of home ungenial to the growth of religious feeling, the mother does wisely, most wisely, to send her children beyond the reach of such powerfully contaminating influence, until their own characters are sufficiently established, and their own views so far confirmed, as to render it less likely to be injurious to their best interests.

The situation of mothers thus circumstanced, is one which claims our deepest, tenderest sympathy ; and if for no other class of persons, for them alone, it would be well worth all the labor required by the routine of school-learning, and all the anxiety and pains bestowed upon the forming of different systems of education, to provide the children of such parents with a place of refuge from the many temptations and disadvantages of their lot, as well as with a temporary home more favorable to the cultivation of religious principles than their own. If for no other class of persons, we ought to be thankful for the sake of these, that there are noble-minded individuals, willing to spend their talents and their time in the most laborious of all occupations ; at the same time that it is one, which, in a worldly point of view, receives the smallest portion of reward. We ought to be thankful that there are those, who, in the discharge of this onerous but sacred duty, yield to no prejudice which requires a compromise of principle, and shrink from no labor which human strength can sustain ; but patiently, faithfully, and without hope of reward, except in a future state, and from Him who seeth in secret, and to whom alone is really known the incalculable difficulties of their peculiar lot, go on from month to month, and from year to year, sacrificing daily, and sometimes nightly rest, nay, almost every other personal indulgence, for the sake of training up young persons from whom *they* never can receive the love of children ; and for the sake of forming characters, whose highest, noblest, and most attractive qualifications, will pass from under their view, and perhaps never again in this world be recognized by *them*.

After looking seriously at the situation of mothers who are really unable to educate their own children, at the situation of those who cannot hope to preserve them from contamination at home ; after considering the immense responsibility and labor of those who undertake the management of schools, it seems strange that parents do not generally consider it as part of their duty, to see that justice is done in committing their children

to the care of comparative strangers. It seems strange that there should be any mothers found so ungenerous and inconsiderate as to hold up to their children the prospect of going to school, by way of threatening them with a punishment, rather than indulging them with a privilege. Yet so it is; and those who undertake the most difficult of all duties, have too often to contend with a prejudice in the minds of the young, against that mode of instruction which is carried on from home, or rather, in other words, against being sent to school. Thus we often hear mothers say—"If you do not apply yourself to your lessons, or if you do not mind what I say, you shall be sent away to school." Yet even this threat is scarcely so influential upon the minds of children, as the feasting and revelry of home during the short season of holiday life which children sent to school occasionally enjoy, and which, when compared with the dull routine of daily tasks, and the plain substantial food it is necessary to provide where many have to be fed, during the rest of the year, presents a contrast by no means favorable to the scholastic view of the subject, though in reality the young pupil is often happier at school than at home.

Indeed, if we were to judge of happiness by healthy, cheerful looks, and by general contentment of appearance and manners, we should be compelled to say, that school had often greatly the advantage over home; for what with indulgence, over-eating, and want of regular employment, the holiday life is apt to close with little satisfaction beyond the feeling that it has come to an end; while the return to school habits, and school discipline again, is attended with no other regret, than what may easily be traced to a spoiled temper, and a disordered stomach.

But treating the subject more seriously, I would ask, Is all this just, to those who take the children back under their care, about as much injured as it is possible to be in the space of time set apart for relaxation? Is it just, to permit children to think that home, if they might but be permitted to remain there, would be always the same as it appears to

them during the holidays; and that school is a place of punishment, from which if they could but escape, they should be always doing as they liked, always eating good things, and consequently always happy? Is it just, to put them upon making comparisons, to elicit from them confessions as to what they endure in the way of privation, what things are mean, what things are wanting to comfort, and wherein they might easily be more indulged than they are? Yet all this is done again and again, and then it is regretted that children are not fond of school.

But is it really regretted? No; the secret lies here. There is a paltry kind of jealousy in the minds of some mothers, lest their children should derive as large a portion of enjoyment from others, as from themselves. They do not wish them to be made happy, so much as they wish to be the makers of their happiness. They wish, in fact, that their children should look to them as the sole fountain of indulgence and pleasure; and in order to accomplish this selfish purpose, they are willing to assist in persuading them that they are miserable during ten months of the year.

We gladly turn, however, from the contemplation of such practices, to the situation of a mother, who, conscious of her own inability to conduct the intellectual education of her children, holds her trust as a parent too sacred, to permit her to confide the whole of their moral training to another. Such will doubtless have recourse to the plan of engaging teachers in their own families, in which case, the mother, if she be a judicious woman, can with the greatest propriety take the general charge and oversight of her children's education, so far at least as she fully understands it. And without much learning herself, she may often understand with what particular faculties her children are naturally endowed, in what respects they require to be urged on, and in what restrained, with many other points of the utmost importance to be known in conducting their education.

The mother too must know, or at any rate she ought to know, what are the remote objects to be kept in view in the training and

culture of her children's minds. As when one sense, particularly that of sight, is defective, some of the others may be quickened to such a degree as to supply its deficiency ; so, where one mental faculty is defective, the mother will be aware that others ought to be so cultivated as to supply its place. She will be able to understand the difference betwixt a mere mechanical memory, and a memory depending upon cause and effect ; and therefore, when told that one of her children is a good historian because it remembers dates, she will turn with satisfaction to another, who is defective in dates, because she knows that he can remember the spirit of the history he reads.

These examples are but specimens of a vast variety of considerations which come within the sphere of a mother's observation, and to act upon which, constitutes an important part of maternal duty. Especially, we must observe among this class, the case of a child endowed with one talent in an extraordinary degree. In all such cases, it gratifies the pride of the teacher, at the same time that it affords him pleasure, to cultivate such talent to a great extent. But the mother, whose care is for the happiness of her child, rather than its renown, who would not risk its safety for the world's applause, and who looks onward to its ultimate good, rather than to its immediate success—the mother asks with fear and trembling—perhaps she asks with faith and prayer, what moral faculty it will be wisest to cultivate with peculiar attention, so as best to preserve her child from the dangers which beset the path of genius, or of extraordinary talent of any kind. If the talent be for music, the mother will be quick to feel, that an attachment to home, and interest in the fireside circle there, will be the best preservation which human means afford ; and if this talent is displayed in a son, she will be anxious that his sisters shall associate themselves with him in the same pursuit ; she will listen, when perhaps it is not convenient to her, to the last piece he has learned ; she will even ask him to sing or play, when as a merely selfish gratification

it is far from being what she would most desire ; and she will bear patiently with his practising even upon the violin, rather than he should feel that he must seek for sympathy among strangers, and an audience away from home.

I have mentioned music, as the talent which occurred to me as most liable to lead into temptation, but every other natural endowment of a high and distinguished character may be studiously preserved from danger in the same manner as this ; and it is only to the mother that we can look for the discharge of this important trust. It is only to the mother that we can look for the general character of her child. Education may be well paid for, lessons may be regular, and teachers highly approved, but when all the different branches of learning have been taught by separate masters, the character of the child will still be demanded at the mother's hand.

But we are told again that a religious education is what the mother wishes to insure, in sending her children to school ; and certainly where some of those disadvantages prevail at home, to which allusion has already been made, she does well in placing them under more efficient care, or in circumstances where they will be less exposed to temptation. There are, however, many excellent mothers, whose own care one would suppose likely to be more efficient in this respect, than it is possible for that of any superintendent of a school to be ; and here is one of those strange anomalies which often startle us into astonishment at the various contradictions presented by human nature—that a pious mother, truly and deeply solicitous for the best interests of her children—a mother to whom religion is indeed the one thing needful, whose early training of her family has been watchful and scrupulous, and whose prayers are offered up with trembling earnestness that no rude wind may blight the blossoms of bright promise already opening in the young minds committed to her care—that such a mother should be willing—nay, anxious to commit

her children to the charge of comparative strangers, who must necessarily commence the arduous task of educating them for time and for eternity, without that one great qualification by which she has been especially fitted for the work—without a parent's love.

Nor is this all. The mother knows what characters, and tempers, what habits, conversation, and even what thoughts, engage the attention or occupy the minds of those who meet around her own fireside. She knows in short what elements compose the moral atmosphere of home. They may not all be pure, they may not all be healthy, but still she knows what they are, and how they combine with, oppose, or operate upon, each other. In a school composed of ten, twenty, or fifty children, neither the mother nor any one else can know this, because the very system of school discipline precludes the possibility of that close and long-continued intimacy which prevails in private families; it must therefore be a work of faith, and that of no common order, to believe that the moral atmosphere of schools will contain nothing injurious, or even less than is contained in that of home.

It is a great sacrifice for natural love to make, for that instinctive attachment which is fed by caresses, and which lives in the presence of the beloved object,—it is a great sacrifice even for maternal affection to make, when a mother sends away a hopeful and lovely child for months, and years, in the fresh spring-time of its existence, when each day unfolds some opening bud, and each year brings forth some ripening fruit. She would hardly treat her garden in this manner. If she wished it to be as beautiful as care and culture could make it, she would hardly let it out for years, and allow strangers to have all the responsibility of making it what it ought to be, while upon them would be wasted all its sweets. She would hardly give this garden up while all its plants were tender, and required the greatest care; while all its bowers and beds, and pleasant walks, and spots of beauty, were being planned, laid out, and cultivated, only to resume her right

to the possession of it, when all was finished, when the plants had taken deep and lasting root, and the trees had grown to a stately height, after the manner of the bending of the early twig. Even in her garden, though workmen might be employed in various departments of cultivation, the mother's *enjoyment* would be to be always on the spot, to take the direction of the whole, to see that the gardeners did their duty; but especially to luxuriate in the perpetual delight which the progress and the beauty of that garden would afford. Truly it is a mystery beyond solution, that a fond mother should prefer sending her children away from home, to pursue their education entirely under the care of strangers!

But the greatest mystery is yet to come. What is the religious education of a child? Some persons appear to think it consists entirely in imparting instruction, or storing its memory with religious knowledge; and certainly, as far as knowledge goes, this is a most important part of religious education; but then it is only a *part*. To be educated for a profession, an art, or a business, is to learn to practise it; and above every other profession, it is so with that of religion. It is the custom in some parts of Germany, to have *religion masters* attend young people at certain hours during the progress of their education, and the religious education of schools must necessarily, to a certain extent, resemble this; while that of home may be adapted to every peculiarity of character, as well as to all those changes in the tone and the temper of the mind, by which young persons are rendered more or less susceptible of impression. How is it, then, that the pious mother can willingly resign those precious moments of familiar intercourse between herself and her child, when the fear of shame is lost sight of in the confidence of love, and it spreads before her—legible perhaps to no other eye—the little tablet of its half-formed thoughts, and asks and hears about the things of heaven? How is it she can bear to think, that when ill or sorrowful, perhaps buffeted by strangers, perhaps un-

kindly treated by companions rude in thought and act, perhaps guilty, punished, and penitent, it sinks weeping upon its little couch at night, and wonders whether indeed the great God of heaven and earth is really kind ;—how can she bear to think that no one comes to lay a fond protecting hand upon its brow, to sing the hymn of peace, or to tell of a blessed Saviour who took little children in his arms, and said that of such was the kingdom of his Father ?

Beyond such thoughts, which one would naturally suppose might present themselves with intense interest, and in endless variety, to the mind of the fond mother, there are considerations with regard to the peculiarities of a child, which, if duly considered, would always operate against a system of education carried on at public schools. I mean the peculiar characteristics of children, one requiring a mode of treatment so different from another. As relates to lessons, and mere learning, this is perhaps less necessary to be considered ; but as relates to religious education, it is of immense importance, since there are scarcely two human minds so constituted, as to be seriously impressed in exactly the same manner ; or, we might add, likely to be impressed at the same time ; for there is as much in fitness of time for receiving, as in fitness of means for imparting, religious instruction. It is therefore the mother alone, with her faithful watching, her instinctive perceptions, and her fervent zeal for the everlasting welfare of her child, who is fully qualified to use to the best advantage, all the means which a kind Providence has placed in her hands, for the religious education of her children.

With these remarks, and with an assurance to the mothers of England that I have no wish to do more than suggest ideas for their consideration, and by no means would presume either to dictate or to judge respecting their duties on this important subject, I will close my observations by quoting, at considerable length, an admirable summary of the advantages to be derived from children being educated under the eye of their parents.

These remarks occur in "Home Education," a work which all mothers, who doubt the desirableness of sending their children to school, would do well to peruse ; for though they will see, as many have done, that the system of education recommended there, would require advantages of a domestic character, and qualifications on the part of the mother, far beyond what it is the privilege of most families to enjoy, there are admirable passages, and valuable and useful hints, which may be rendered highly serviceable in giving the subject a serious and impartial consideration.

"I wish, then," says the author of "Home Education," after many excellent remarks on the subject, "briefly to point out the probable influence upon the country, of the prevalence, to some extent, of home education ; and what I mean to affirm is this—that, even if schools, and *large* schools, were granted to be generally better adapted to the practical ends of education than private instruction, and that the *majority* of all ranks should receive their mental culture in that mode ; nevertheless, that the welfare of society, on the whole, demands the prevalence, to some considerable extent, of the other method ; and that a *portion* of the community—a portion of every rank of the middle and upper classes especially, should come under that very different and more intimate process of culture of which home must be the *scene*. The school-bred man is of one sort—the home-bred man is of another ; and the community has need of both : nor could any measures be much more to be deprecated, nor any tyranny of fashion more to be resisted, than such as should render a public education, from first to last, compulsory and universal.

"It is found, in fact, that a quiet, but firm individuality—a self-originating steadiness of purpose, a thoughtful intensity of sentiment, and a passive power, such as stems the tide of fashion and frivolous opinions, belong, as their characteristics, to home-bred men ; and especially to such of this class as are self-taught. Now we affirm that, whatever may

sometimes be the rigidity or the uncompromising sternness of men of this stamp, a serious, and perhaps a fatal damage would be sustained by the community, if entirely deprived of the moral and political element which they bring into the mass. As the social machinery must come to a stand if all possessed so fixed an individuality as to think and act without regard to the general bias of opinion; so would it acquire too much momentum, if none were distinguished by habits of feeling springing from themselves.

"In schools, and especially in large schools, the two lessons learned by boys—sometimes by two classes of tempers, and often by the same individuals at different stages of their course—are the lesson of domination, and the lesson of abject compliance with tyranny. Even the degree in which, of late, public attention has been directed towards the evils whence so much mischief has been proved to arise, has not availed to alleviate them more than to a very small amount; nor can it be doubted but that the habit of tyrannizing, as well as the habit of yielding servile submission, notwithstanding the correction they may receive on entering upon life, will, more or less, continue to affect the dispositions of men, and must in a real, if not in a very conspicuous manner, exert an influence over the political temper and movements of the community.

"But a very different class of feeling belongs to young persons educated at home, and who, although perhaps they may not be prompt to contend for the foremost positions in society, are wholly unprepared to cringe before arrogance and oppression. They have moreover acquired in seclusion that decisive individuality of temper which impels them on all occasions to search for a reason satisfactory to themselves, before they bow to the dictates of those who have no right to their submission. Moreover, the bosoms of young persons who have been well trained around the gentle influences of the domestic circle, and have lived in the intimacy of intelligent

and ingenuous parents, and of other adults, are likely to be fraught with profound and delicate sentiments—with the love of truth, of justice, and of honor; and they are, therefore, equally disinclined either to exercise despotism, or to yield to it. Young men so nurtured under the paternal roof, when, for the first time, they encounter the rude wilfulness and the selfish violence of vulgar spirits in the open world, may perhaps recoil, and be tempted to leave the field in disgust; but they presently (if not naturally feeble-minded) recover their self-possession, and place their foot firmly in the path where what is just and good is to be maintained against insolent power.

"The substantial liberties of a community involve much more than the bare protection of persons and chattels; for there is a liberty of thought and of speech which may be curtailed, or almost destroyed, in countries that are the loudest in boasting their freedom. There is a liberty, moral and intellectual—the true glory of a people—which consists in, and demands the unrestrained expansion of all faculties, the exercise of all talents, and the spontaneous expression of all diversities of taste, and of all forms of individuality. But this high liberty of mind, forfeited often in the very struggle of nations to secure or to extend political liberty, must assuredly be favored by whatever cherishes distinctness of character; and it must as certainly be endangered by whatever breaks down individuality, and tends to impose uniformity upon the whole.

"In this view, a systematic Home Education may fairly claim no trivial importance, as a means of sending forth among the school-bred majority, those with whose habits of mind there is mingled a firm and modest sentiment of self-respect—not cynical, but yet unconquerable—resting, as it will, upon the steady basis of personal wisdom and virtue. It is men of this stamp who will be the true conservators of their country's freedom."

CHAPTER X.

ON THE TRAINING OF BOYS.

It is scarcely possible to look at the heading of this chapter, without being struck with the wide range of important considerations which it necessarily embraces. The sphere in which man has to act, is not more different from that in which woman finds her appointed duties, than the constitution of the mind of one is from that of the other. I say nothing here about superiority in one, and inferiority in the other; because I consider that to be an idle question, since nothing can be good, and consequently nothing can be superior, except in proportion as it answers the end for which it was created. There are writers, however, and not a few, in the present day, who maintain that both have equal powers, and are fitted for the same field of action.

Without endeavoring to combat an opinion so opposed at once to nature and religion, to philosophy and common sense, I would just ask, whether women, who faithfully perform their duties, have not at present enough to do in their accustomed and familiar place? If mothers, wives, and mistresses of houses, have already enough to do as women, the inference is plain, that in proportion as they assume the duties of men, the nobler sex must be willing to take part in theirs, otherwise there must be a loss of useful exertion in that department where it cannot well be spared. Wishing, therefore, to every man who advocates the ability and fitness of women to take part with men on equal terms in all public affairs, no worse wish, than that he may have a wife a member of parliament, and he himself obliged to stay at home and darn stockings; I will leave this subject with a short but appropriate passage from Miss Edgeworth, where, in speaking of temper, the author alludes to the appropriate position of woman, in her usually clear and forcible style:

"A man in a furious passion is terrible to his enemies, but a woman in a passion is

disgusting to her friends; she loses the respect due to her sex, and she has not masculine strength and courage to enforce any other species of respect. These circumstances should be considered by writers who advise that no difference should be made in the education of the two sexes. We cannot help thinking that their happiness is of more consequence than their speculative rights; and we wish to educate women so that they may be happy in the situations in which they are most likely to be placed."

I repeat, then, that to me nothing appears more obvious, than that the Allwise Disposer of human events has given to man a widely different range of duty from that which is appointed for woman; and that in order to fit him for his situation, he has been endowed with peculiar capabilities of mind, which it is the important business of the mother to examine and consider, so as to turn to the best account; for it must ever be borne in mind, by those who undertake the training of youth, that they have not to *create* materials for character, but to use such as nature has placed in their hands to the best purpose.

In the first place, why are boys so mischievous, disorderly, and troublesome? Not, certainly, as one might be sometimes almost tempted to suppose, because they are created for the purpose of trying other people's patience; but because they have a superabundance of mental and bodily energy, which must find exercise in one way or another. Nor would we wish to see them without this energy. The mother who complains of her boys, that they will neither be quiet themselves, nor allow other people to be so, who is perpetually teasing them to sit still, and be good boys, little thinks what she is about; for without this restless and energetic principle in their nature, where would be the man of enterprise, where would be the traveller, the engineer, the statesman, or the philosopher? for there is an earnest perseverance, and an intensity of thought, which requires as much energy to maintain, on the part of the philosopher, as is required on that

of the discoverer of a new island in a distant region of the globe.

Nor must we forget that, especially in the present day, there is enterprise required in almost every undertaking to which the energies of man can be directed; and he who in his early years has done little but sit still to be a good boy, would be likely, as our worldly affairs are now conducted, to be left sitting alone, after all his companions had marched onward in pursuit of their different objects of interest or importance. What is necessary then to be done with boys, is to use up their energies, so that nothing shall run to waste; so that there shall in fact be no overflow into those streams of mischief and disorder, which sometimes threaten to overwhelm and destroy the peace of a whole household.

The mother's care and ingenuity, however, are much needed here. It is not dry lessons and mere learning, though these are good so far as they go, which constitute the sum total of what is required. These very properly occupy the time and the attention, but they do not satisfy that restless craving for excitement, nor employ that internal stimulus, which are perpetually urging a boy to build up or break down, to help or to hinder, and to please or to vex, as circumstances and the humor of the moment may direct. But why, with all this impetuous desire for action, should not boys be made useful in a family? For my own part, I never could imagine why little girls were to fetch and carry, and to do all the other business of domestic usefulness necessary to fireside comfort, while boys sat still, and fancied themselves into lords of the creation; and I am now convinced it is more the fault of early training, than of any natural peculiarity of their own characters, where the brothers in a family are selfish and unaccommodating towards their sisters. I am convinced that where boys are so rationally taught as not to regard it as a degradation, there are many occupations in a household by which they may occasionally be made happy and useful at the same time; and as no man ever was the worse for knowing how to use his hands, there would by this mode

of training be many a traveller sent forth, many an emigrant, and many a missionary, better qualified than they now are to cope with the difficulties of life, and relieved of much of the annoyance and distress which the usages of different countries are apt at first to occasion.

But the influence of a mother with regard to the training of boys is so much more important in a moral and religious point of view than in any other, that I shall confine my observations chiefly to those cases in which a boy is likely to be made better, rather than to those in which he may be made wiser, by his mother. And this, I need hardly repeat, is not to be done by making him sit still. No; there is a great deal more than this to be done, before the mother and her son can pass along the journey of life, a mutual support and comfort to each other; but let the mother do her part with judgment, feeling, and right principle, and she may effectually establish between herself and her son, a relationship of sentiment as well as kindred—a relationship which has nothing in this world to compare with it, for the tenderness of its associations, the intensity of its interests, and the sacred influence it is calculated to exercise.

Whether we contemplate the character of a beloved and honored mother, checking by soft yet patient words the wild sports of boyhood, and winning by her gentleness, where it would be impossible to control by mere authority; or whether we look at the aged matron bending on her journey towards the grave, bereft perhaps of every other earthly stay, except the faithful arm of her devoted son; when we see that to him, all full of life and hope and animation as he is, her venerable form is still lovely, simply because it is his mother's; that her voice is still sweet, because it is the same which spoke to him in childhood, calling him back from danger, and luring him into paths of safety when his boyish waywardness might have made shipwreck of his peace; and when we know that her influence is still the same—nay, more, because, though trembling, feeble, and dependent, as regards the things of time, she

is already on the borders of that eternity for which it has been the study of her life to prepare herself and him—when we see all this so beautifully illustrated, as it is sometimes in the intercourse of the mother and her son, it is with no common feeling that we breathe the wish, with regard to mothers in general, that they should so estimate and use their capabilities, as to bind themselves by a union so sacred to the interests and affections of their sons.

And after all, boys are not so difficult to deal with as some persons are apt to suppose, provided only a mother is willing to make the necessary sacrifice. Indeed it is a generally acknowledged fact, that where judiciously treated, they are more manageable under female influence, than under any other. In the first place, then, let it be remembered, that boys must be humored to a certain extent. Both boys and men require this, and they have a right to expect it from women. Some parents appear to think that by the exercise of direct authority, they can prevent their sons seeking unsuitable amusements, and associates not to be approved; but I have no hesitation in saying, that this method of managing boys never did answer the purpose fully, and never will. No; that restless activity, which is a part of their nature, and which if rightly directed is one of the most valuable characteristics they possess, must find exercise somewhere; and unless provided with a lawful and sufficient substitute, will recur, perhaps in secret, to the enjoyment of forbidden things. Unless, therefore, a boy is to some extent humored, or amused, and made happy in the parlor with his parents, he will be in danger of seeking the excitement and interest which his natural temperament demands, in the kitchen or the stable, if not entirely away from home.

Boys also, are in reality more social, than is sometimes supposed. They are said to do very well if turned out of the room, elbowed off, or made to play by themselves; but it is only because they cannot do better; for no one is more pleased or more thankful than an amiable boy, when any kind interest is

taken in his occupations and pursuits. No one is more pleased either, when the female part of the family can be induced to join in these; and the promise of a mother or a sister to let themselves be rowed round an island, or driven in a pony-chase, is often long remembered by a boy, and prepared for with a kind of natural politeness, which is almost irresistible to the heart of woman, because, unlike much of the politeness of the world, it is at once both flattering and sincere.

It is only by the sacrifice of a little time, and occasionally, it must be confessed, a little patience, that a mother can gain upon her sons in the manner I would so earnestly recommend; and if the love of a mother is not sufficient to help her through the little difficulties that may arise, she has an abundant reward in the feeling, that by associating herself with boys in their pleasures and amusements, by even studying to amuse and interest them herself, she is not only cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with their real characters, than could be obtained in any other way; but is in reality rendering herself an object of interest—of delight—nay, almost of beauty to them; since whatever charms and endears, becomes beautiful to the eye of affection.

I repeat, for it cannot be too much impressed upon the minds of women, that both men and boys must be humored. A mother begins the training of her boys with the unparalleled advantage of natural affection; but beyond this, and as soon as it gives place to thoughts of a more mature and calculating nature, she must begin to charm—she must be absolutely delightful in the opinion of her sons, in order to possess unbounded influence over them. This, however, we must be sure to bear in mind, is not to be obtained by unbounded indulgence; and here lies the great secret of managing boys; for there must be, on the part of the mother, an exercise of the most strict and unyielding authority with regard to all household rules, and indeed with regard to all things of importance, combined with a certain kind of playfulness, vivacity, and tact, in order, as I

have already said, to charm, as well as to influence.

Again; boys are excessively fond of what certain wise people would call nonsense: but what is called nonsense, is not always folly; and there is often much development of character, and much eliciting of good taste and right feeling, in the playful familiarity of a family united in all its members. At all events, the boys, whose ambition it is to share their laughter and their frolic with their mother, will establish for themselves, if she be a right-minded woman, a rule of safety, for which she ought indeed to be most thankful; for the young man who can be trusted in his mirth, neither to go too far, nor choose for it a wrong object, and who is in no danger of being betrayed by excitement into the indulgence of any wrong feeling, may indeed be said to have reaped no trifling advantage from the society of his mother.

Whether young or old, there is something in the nature of man, which is, to a certain extent, repelled by his own sex, and which requires association with the gentler nature of woman. Noisy and boisterous as boys may be, they are not always happy, and not always sufficient of themselves for their own enjoyment. They have their difficulties, their trials, and their moments of depression; and to whom are they then to go but to their mother? Yet how, if she has never shared their pleasures, is she to be the confidant of their sorrows? No; it is not a little time wasted, as she might call it, a little sewing laid aside, a little housekeeping neglected, nor even a party given up, that can, by a right-minded woman, be considered a sacrifice too great to make, in order to obtain the entire and unbounded confidence of her children; and deep and rich is her reward, if, by such sacrifices, she can arrive at the blessed certainty that they will conceal nothing from her—not even the confession of their guilt, when they have done wrong. Though all the world should blame them, and though she herself should blame them more than all the world, there ought to be a feeling in the mind of a son towards his mother, that with her

severest rebuke, will be blended a sympathy more intense than he could find elsewhere.

In those minute and familiar observations which from time to time all persons make upon social and domestic life, one thing has struck me very forcibly, and that is, that in the training of children, we all endeavor too much to put in practice the corrective process, and think too little of the preventive. Many mothers who are most exemplary in the treatment of their children after they have done wrong, spend comparatively little thought upon how to induce them to do right. To preoccupy the mind with good, and to form the character of children upon right principles, I believe to be the holiest duty of a mother, at the same time that it is the happiest; for though there may often be sweet seasons of endearment after the young heart has been thrown open by convictions of guilt, and softened by penitence, the less frequently such seasons have to occur, the better it is for all parties.

I mention this view of the subject particularly here, because it is more especially with boys, that mothers appear to disregard this early and sacred duty; and when they find they have no influence over them, or think the whole affair of management too troublesome to undertake, they come in time to regard their boys as wholly intractable, and thus give them up, until sent to school, where they hope that, by paying for their education, all will be set right.

It should be remembered too by mothers, that many of their good qualities are not obvious to boys, at the same time that they are keenly alive in their perceptions of others. Among the former class may be reckoned those practical household virtues, of which in after life, and when householders themselves, they form so high a value; but which, while children, they generally esteem no more than they do the accomplishments of nurses, cooks, and washerwomen. Thus, for a mother to be busy with her domestic affairs, goes no way with a boy in engaging his respect, not even to be busy with them to good purpose; because he is necessarily

incapable of understanding how much good management, and general good sense, are required, to conduct them properly. The most industrious and laborious mothers are, consequently, in their capacity of housekeepers, but little esteemed for this part of their characters by boys; while on the other hand, a woman who acquits herself well in company, who never asks a silly question, nor gives a foolish answer, and whose general abilities and standing in society are such as to enable her to take part in intellectual conversation, and especially if she inspires the respectful attention of influential and clever men, so as to be addressed by them at table, her opinion asked on matters of moment, and, what is more, attended to when given; all this is quickly perceived, and keenly appreciated by an affectionate boy, who is but too happy to have an opportunity of feeling proud of his mother.

I need hardly say that, on the other hand, however tender and conciliating the conduct of a mother may be towards her children, if, on public occasions, her sons discover that she has neither the knowledge nor the tact to acquit herself like a woman of sense, the star of her ascendancy will most probably go down, never again to rise to them. It is woman alone, who, having once loved, can still love on, when she has ceased to admire, and when in reality it is painful and humiliating to love. Man is in a great measure incapable of doing this; and when a boy has frequently had to blush and feel ashamed for his mother, his affection may be considered as held by a very slender thread.

Seeing all this so frequently exhibited as we do, in the familiar aspect of our social and domestic affairs, it becomes a matter of astonishment and regret, that mothers should allow themselves to sink into such apparent indifference about their intellectual influence over their children, and especially their sons—that they should allow themselves to settle down into mere household machines, or the automaton of an occasional party, when the temporal and eternal interests of their sons may perhaps be hanging upon the respect

which they inspire in their opening and susceptible minds.

I am aware that many kind-hearted and worthy women, who throw the whole amount of their energies into the means of making their sons and husbands comfortable as regards the body, conscientiously believe they are discharging a duty of paramount importance; and certainly there is no duty, except such as are of a strictly religious character, upon the right discharge of which so many others are dependent, for without attention to the substantial and bodily comforts of a family, I imagine there would be little good to be expected from intellectual influence. But then we should remember that this duty is only one among a many; or rather, only a foundation upon which the superstructure of intellectual influence must rest; and as wisely might we place the solid base of a building at the top, and the light and ornamental architecture beneath; or expose the machinery of a clock to view, and conceal the index plate, as reverse the true order of social economy, so as to make our domestic affairs the most prominent, and neglect those more important matters which belong to the cultivation and right exercise of the immortal mind.

Would that it could be impressed upon the understanding of every woman, that there is no beauty, and there can be no right order, in that establishment, where the domestic machine does not move quietly, and in a manner unseen. It is true there is no comfort when it stops, or is allowed to fall out of order; but there may be almost as much annoyance where it is always exposed to view, in order that the world may see how admirably it is regulated.

There are many women extremely anxious to have a good dinner placed before their sons and husbands on their returning home, and very properly so; but why are they not equally anxious to set before them an intellectual refreshment! The answer is an obvious one—that they would not relish it so well. Yet again I would ask, may not this be because it is not dressed and arranged with half the skill

and care bestowed upon a favorite dish? I appeal not to those who are deficient in education, and certainly not to those who are deficient in natural talent. They must do the best they can, and endeavor to please in some other way; but I do appeal to intellectual and cultivated women, when I implore them to spend a little more time, a little more thought, and a little more pains, in studying how to be intellectually agreeable in their own families, in order that they may exercise a lasting and beneficial influence over their sons; for without this, I am convinced, although they may be loved as mothers, they never will be esteemed as friends, and still less looked up to as counsellors, whose advice may be appealed to in every season of difficulty or trial.

Nor let the mother confine her views exclusively to her own influence, while endeavoring to inspire her sons with a respect for herself. Having learned at the same time tenderly to love, and profoundly to revere, the character of his mother, a young man will go forth into the world with a higher respect for women in general. Where he does not intimately know the individuals with whom he associates, he will often imagine that he sees the virtues of his mother reflected; and in all his intercourse with society, there will be blended a delicacy of feeling towards the female sex, a regard for their good opinion, a pleasure in the companionship of the most intelligent and amiable, which next to religion itself, is ever found the surest safeguard for the protection of a young man in his association with the world.

There is no single omen of future life at once so repulsive, and so alarming, as to hear young men speak as they sometimes do, thinking it spirited and clever, in coarse, vulgar, and disparaging terms of women in general. One cannot help fearing where this is the case, that some want of judgment or want of care must be chargeable upon the mother; and one cannot help turning in idea to those who are but just entering upon their maternal duties, with a fervent hope that they may be more solicitous on this important

point, and that nothing may be wanting on their part to inspire a more reverential, and at the same time a more beneficial feeling.

Under the agreeable supposition that a mother has done all in her power to ensure unbounded influence over her sons, we will now inquire in what particular manner this influence is required to operate, so as to correct some of the objectionable tendencies of character in men in general. Perhaps the greatest temptation to which boys are subject, is to use their strength in an unfair or ungenerous manner, in short, to use it so as to take advantage of comparative weakness. The conviction that they have power, when accompanied with a sense of mastery, is unspeakably agreeable both to men and boys. We see this in all the sports of youth, as well as in many of the occupations to which men are by choice addicted. Even in that of felling trees, and chopping wood, it is surprising the satisfaction they feel in wielding the axe, overcoming resistance, and mastering with wedge and hammer the stubborn nature of the unshapely block. It is the same with almost every thing they undertake either in the way of business or amusement; and in the more elaborate affairs of life, to have gained a difficult point, whatever it may be, or however unproductive of personal advantage, seems to carry a reward along with it, to the individual who succeeds, especially where others have failed.

With such a propensity inherent in his nature, it is evident that what is most wanted, is a strong sense of justice, stronger than can be taught in schools, where *might* is too frequently the only acknowledged *right*. But beyond mere justice, there is one consideration closely connected with this subject, which claims the mother's most earnest attention, and which, if properly impressed upon the mind of youth, would help very much to bring about a new and better order of things among the affairs of mankind. It is simply this—and I am fully aware that it will not at first sight appear so important as I have been led to consider it upon mature consideration—that a generous and noble nature will never

find pleasure in that amusement, which excites laughter in one of the parties concerned, and pain or suffering in the other.

It may seem but a trifle that a boy should abuse the poor ass by the wayside simply because he can, and dare do so. It may seem but a trifle that he should tease his own dogs, and flog his own pony, because he has the power to do so. It may seem but a trifle that he should torment and ill-treat his sisters, because they have not the strength to defend themselves: but when we think to what all this may grow, it ought to be regarded as one of the surest symptoms of a mean, ungenerous, and tyrannical disposition, which a youth can exhibit; and when we trace it all back to the manner in which he was taught in early childhood, to find his amusement chiefly in those sports which occasioned suffering or death, and over which he was allowed to laugh and exult as much as he liked, we cannot wonder that his character should ultimately prove the very reverse of all that is noble or excellent.

In all such cases, I am aware it is to the mother alone that we can appeal; for men, with some few admirable exceptions, are not quick-sighted or particularly scrupulous on these points. But the mother surely can prevent the poor dog at the fireside having its nose and eyes filled with snuff, its tail pinched, and its feet trod upon, to make sport for the young tyrants of the nursery. The mother surely can prevent this, not always by direct authority, for that would make some boys prolong the amusement, for the purpose of showing their power in a twofold manner; and not by entreaty either, for that might possibly excite a laugh almost as exulting as that which is awakened by the sufferings of the tortured animal. From scenes like this, it is too often the fate of woman to turn away distressed, but altogether powerless. But let her not despair, for if ever the preventive system is wanted to operate with all its efficacy, it is here; for let the mind of a boy be preoccupied with a strong impression of the absolute meanness of making sport for himself, out of that which is misery

to another, and he will be preserved from much of the cruelty so frequently practised upon animals, and much of what is practised by the strong towards the weak of his own species as well.

I do not say that boys should be sent forth into the world, suffering every moment from that morbid sensibility, which is sufficiently objectionable in girls. No one can admire, more than I do, the manliness which meets every difficulty with unabated energy, and the bravery which, when called into action in a good cause, can look at every danger without flinching; and wherever pain has to be inflicted as a necessary evil, no one can admire more than I do the moral courage which can overcome the natural shrinking of a generous and feeling nature, because it is an act of duty or necessity that suffering must be imposed; but to delight in giving pain, to exult in it, to make the inflicting and witnessing of pain a favorite sport—this is entirely a different matter; and this it is, against which I would so earnestly warn the mother to guard her child by that strong principle to which allusion has been made.

It may be said that I am not aware to what this principle would lead, if thoroughly carried out; how it would destroy the amusement of field-sports, and many other of those gentlemanly occupations, the sole pleasure of which consists in taking advantage of the weaker party, so as to occasion either suffering or death. Yet without making it any part of my business to interfere with the game laws, and without wishing in any way to encroach upon the rights and the privileges of country gentlemen, I still maintain that it is inconsistent with a noble and a truly generous nature, to find sport in what occasions unnecessary suffering to any living creature, however weak, or however insignificant; and I still believe that this principle carried out through all the intercourse of social and domestic life, would do more to refine and elevate the character of man, than any other that we could propose for his consideration.

Nor is it upon the animal creation alone,

that this principle would operate so beneficially. The opposite and most frequent one, of the strong taking advantage of the weak, and exulting in the suffering inflicted, and the mastery obtained, may begin with the little boy in the nursery, when he snatches up his sister's kitten, and throws it into the nearest pond; but unfortunately it does not end there, nor possibly until the feelings of woman—the tenderest and deepest she is capable of experiencing—have been made the sport of an idle hour, and in their turn have awakened the merriment which none but the meanest and most cruel of human beings can be supposed to enjoy.

But why should we dwell so long upon this melancholy page of human life—a page whereon is transcribed some of the darkest and saddest records which the history of human affairs presents, when a kind Providence has placed it especially within the range of influence which a judicious mother exercises over her sons, in a great measure to avert this evil, by laying the firm foundation of an early and earnest love of the opposite good; and in attempting to do this, it is a most encouraging fact, that some of the very same materials of moral character are brought into exercise in both cases. A love of power, for instance, and a sense of mastery—why should not these very principles in the nature of a boy, be so directed as to find an appropriate and delightful use in the feeling that he is the natural protector of his sisters; and that as he gains strength, and advances in influence and importance, it will be one of his noblest prerogatives as a man, to protect the weak in general from the oppression and cruelty of the strong. We see here then, that in the beautiful order of Providence, there is no need to extinguish nature; and that the mother has consequently not so difficult a task before her, as she might at first have been led to suppose.

Boys have either naturally a strong tendency to admire justice in the abstract, or they are so accustomed to appeal to justice in defence of their invaded rights, that they learn at a very early age to value it accord-

ingly. It is in fact the only appeal which a man regards it as consistent with his dignity to make; for where a girl would ask for mercy, a boy, as if instinctively, demands justice, and nothing more. It is the part of the mother then to keep this idea most sacred and inviolate in the mind of her son, never to allow it to be mixed up with that of expediency, and never to make use of it in reference to what is endured or received, without being equally, or even more scrupulous, in applying it to what is done or granted. There must be no firing up with indignation because the rights of her son are invaded, and looking quietly on when he invades the rights of another. No; her duty extends far beyond this, for she must teach him that it is infinitely better to suffer wrong, than to inflict it; and that no insult endured can so effectually degrade the character of a man, as to be the individual by whom it is offered.

I have thus far touched only upon a few of those points so necessary for the mother to attend to in the early training of her boys, but there comes a time when, if possible, it is more important still that a young man should look to his mother as his best and nearest friend; I mean when he is first entering upon what is called life, and upon the occupations of man. From some peculiarity in the nature of man, there appears to be frequent difficulties arising betwixt fathers and sons about this period of life, especially if closely associated as members of the same household. One would think, on first looking at the subject, that nothing could be so desirable as for a young man to remain for a long time under the roof of his father; yet in comparatively few instances, is this plan productive of the good desired. Under circumstances of this kind, perhaps more than all others, the mother's care as well as her influence are needed, because no other person can with propriety interfere, and none in fact can have a right to the same degree of intimacy with both parties. But, oh! what judgment, what self-command, what nicety of distinction, what prudence, and what prayer, are needed here! It would seem

that little less than supernatural wisdom, and angelic love, could enable a mother and a wife to tread so intricate a path without leaning too much to one side or the other.

Impelled by that intense and fervent love which a mother's heart alone can feel—accustomed to look with firmness and constancy to the simple question of what is right—and, above all, supported by faith and prayer, a mother, even in the trying situation just alluded to, will see clearly that justice must be done to her sons; that the whole of their future interests, both temporal and eternal, may possibly depend upon the exercise of prudence, in first placing them upon their own foundation; and that an amount of wretchedness, beyond calculation, may be her portion and theirs, if they are not encouraged and helped forward in their temporal affairs.

With these views and feelings, the mother will be solicitous that an early and equitable arrangement should be made with regard to the choice of a profession, or a business, for her sons. And here I cannot but observe with regret, that almost all writers on the subject of education, address themselves exclusively to ladies and gentlemen. We have already admirable hints on "the choice of a profession," but I should like to find some author bold enough to write about the choice and conduct of a trade; for it is to the uprightness and general intelligence of persons occupied in trade, as well as devoted to professions, that we ought to look for the true dignity of our country; and I believe the able and conscientious writer, who should employ his talents in the exposure and correction of abuses in this department, and to the establishment of a new system of moral laws, by which business in general should be conducted upon higher and purer principles than it is at present, would do more for the true interests of his country, than if he added a new continent to her territory, or even purchased for her the empire of the whole world.

One is apt sometimes to suppose, on looking at the affairs of this world, that men, especially, have two sets of consciences, two

kinds of moral laws, and two varieties of religious faith. That they have one conscience for the sanctuary, and another for the desk and the counter, is but too evident; for many, whose sincerity in the hour of worship is not to be doubted, go back to the busy scene of their weekly avocations, to practise—just because other people do the same—what the conscience of the sanctuary would severely condemn. They do this by habit, and in consequence of their having been trained to it by respectable masters, during the time they were clerks or apprentices; they do not see that it can be very wrong, or, at all events, they know that in such practices they are no worse than their neighbors; and if at times the conscience of the sanctuary does visit the office, the warehouse, or the shop, it is only to make them wish, for the moment, that other men of business would agree to give up such practices, and thus make the effort easier and less disadvantageous to them.

After a man is thoroughly embarked in business, conducted upon the customary plan, it would be difficult indeed, perhaps ruinous to his worldly affairs, for him to make a stand against the generally acknowledged requirements of self-interest. Yet there are not wanting noble and extraordinary instances of Christian men, who have made this sacrifice for the sake of serving more faithfully a heavenly, than an earthly, Master; and others again, who, content with a decent competency, have retired from a scene of contention, in which principle, when opposed to worldly aggrandizement, so seldom gains an entire victory.

It must not be supposed, however, that I am presuming to assail the general integrity of men of business. Far from it; for I believe in this respect our country, to say the least of it, would hold an honored place in a general comparison of the moral dignity of different nations; but I refer particularly to those *allowed* practices among persons engaged in trade, which would not bear to be tested by the moral standard of the gospel; and to that conformity with the customs of the world, which is too seldom brought un-

der the cognizance of the conscience of the sanctuary.

Now, in proportion as it is difficult for the traveller who has long pursued a dubious course, entangled himself with associations, and even learned to adapt himself to the circumstances around him—in proportion as it is difficult for him to return, and begin his course afresh, it is important that other travellers should be warned by his situation to set out aright; and in proportion as it is difficult for the man of business, thoroughly embarked on the ocean of worldly success, contending with its different currents, and adjusting himself and his affairs to the winds and the tides he meets with there—in proportion as it is difficult for such a man to return, and sail again upon a different course, with new rigging, fresh ballast, and a pilot to whose direction he has not been accustomed—there devolves upon the mothers of England the important and the sacred duty of endeavoring to fit out their sons for a course of action, even if it be in the humblest affairs of business, or the lowest occupations of trade, by which they may exemplify the great principles of justice, integrity, and truth, and thus glorify their Father who is in heaven, while engaged in the common and familiar avocations of earth.

If religion be indeed the one thing needful, and if in the opinion of his parents it bears no comparison in importance with any other, let no young man be sent out to learn a trade or a profession under an irreligious master. It may be said that he goes to such a master to learn his business only; but does he learn that, and nothing else? or does not the mere fact of his parents having selected such a master, give a sanction to him in associating with such characters when he meets with them in society, as well as in business? If the two subjects admit of a comparison, or if a parent prefers that his son should be made a good engineer, letting his religious interests occupy but a secondary consideration; rather than that he should be a religious man, at the risk of being an inferior engineer, then, indeed, it is a waste of words to dwell upon this

point. But even if men are blinded by worldly interest here, as in so many instances it is evident they are, surely pious Christian mothers ought the more to regard it as their especial duty, to make a stand against this fatal and too generally prevailing error. Surely the mother has a right to see that so great an act of mercy, as well as justice, is done to her son. Surely she has a right to see that his eternal interests are not lost sight of in those which belong merely to his success in this world, which are at best but uncertain and transitory, and which bear no relation whatever to the account which both parent and child will have to give at the bar of judgment, where the doom of eternal happiness or misery will be finally decided.

But there is a justice which relates to this world, as well as one which belongs only to the world to come, and this demands the mother's watchfulness and care, to see that her son is preserved as much as possible from what will injure or degrade him as a man. Long-continued dependence upon his father, want of occupation, or occupation repugnant to his natural feelings, may do this; and the mother will reap the advantage, as regards him, of having impressed upon the mind of her husband, if he did not feel it before, that a father has no more right to withhold from his sons a just and reasonable settlement in life, than he has to deny them, while boys, a place at his own table. It is possible that the father's own affairs may not always afford him the means of establishing his sons with such advantage as they might at one time have expected; but so far as it can be done, it is a sacred duty on the part of parents, worth almost any sacrifice to perform, and which nothing short of absolute inability to pay their own debts can justify them in neglecting.

I mention these subjects more particularly, because fathers are not always aware of the effect of their conduct towards their sons. They forget, in the more absorbing interests of public or private business, what were their own feelings when young, and they seldom take into account the lowering of the moral

character which must ensue, from their sons not being able to assume the position of men at the time of life, when the laws of nature and of reason require that they should in a great measure be masters of their own actions. Neither do they reflect and calculate as women do upon the moral tendency of things in general, or they would see more clearly that nothing can be more injurious to the character of a young man, or more endanger his safety, than for him to be morally degraded, to lose his self-respect, and to feel that he has not the common place and footing of a man, in society; as he inevitably must, by being denied the privileges of a free agent, and the interest which it is necessary for him to enjoy, in order to enter with spirit and energy into the occupations of a rational being.

To imagine a father neglecting this great duty towards his sons, is to look at a picture too melancholy for contemplation—a picture representing a sort of household slavery, in which the sons are bondmen to their father; and it is from such abuses of parental power, wherever they may exist, that we call upon the mothers of the rising generation to rescue their children; in the first place, by endeavoring to inculcate higher views of moral responsibility in general; and in the next, by exercising their moral courage in so regulating their domestic economy, that the masters of families shall not have to say, they cannot afford to provide for the settlement of their sons.

In pursuing our examination of that most sacred and interesting relationship which subsists between a mother and her sons, the subject assumes so many aspects of importance, that it is difficult to confine it within moderate limits. I will, however, endeavor to draw the chapter to a close, by alluding again to that corrective process, which, however careful parental training may have been, will occasionally, there is too much room to fear, have to be put in practice by the mother; and here she is of all human beings the fittest to be at once the confidant, and the reprover, of her erring sons. She is the fittest,

because from her maternal love she is the most disposed to look charitably upon their actions, and to speak kindly even of their faults; and because she must feel more intensely than any other human being can, the importance of the future being marked by a happier experience than the past.

In one respect, however, the best of women are apt to defeat their own ends when appealing to young men on the subject of their misconduct. From knowing but little of the world, and almost nothing of the temptations to which young men are exposed, they often speak of vice only as it appears to them, without taking into account the various and attractive methods adopted by agents of evil for rendering it at first sight attractive and imposing. They speak of it sometimes as odious and disgusting, when it has perhaps been dressed up so as to appear both lovely and refined, to its victims. They speak of it as hateful, when it has been listened to, uttering in syren tones the language of flattery and love. They speak of it as low, when it has been decked in purple, or has worn a coronet upon its brow; and they speak most justly of its being abhorrent, simply because it is evil, when possibly those to whom they address themselves have just learned to believe it is only women, and ill-bred or weak-spirited persons, who think it so. There is a vast machinery of allurements put in operation by the world, which ought to be taken into account, when we speak to young men of the real nature of vice; and it is not until they have proved the falsehood of its promises, and the worse than hollowness of its pretensions, that they can always be made to see the nature of vice as it really is.

I have sometimes thought, in addressing persons on this subject, and young men in particular, that enough is not said of the *cruelty* of vice. It is true that according to the method of reasoning already alluded to, it may have appeared to them in the character of conciliation and kindness; but I cannot think there would be much difficulty in showing how it is in the nature of all vice to injure, disserve, or destroy. It would not be

difficult for a mother, before her own son has learned to sit in the seat of the scorner, to point out to him instances in which the peace of a family is utterly destroyed by the misconduct of a son; and even in the simple fact of his staying out late at night, she might describe a mother's feelings with such pathos, as to make him shrink from the perpetration of such an act of unkindness, even if he regarded it as nothing more.

This, of course, must be in the commencement of a young man's objectionable career. When he has advanced further in the hardening process, and become proof against such impressions, the mother can only watch and pray for moments of penitence or remorse; and when such occur, then it is that in a conscientious and feeling woman, the perfection and beauty of the female character display themselves; then it is, that the depth and the tenderness of her love is unfolded, that the floodgates of her sympathy are thrown open, while, with an earnestness which belongs only to the affection of a mother, she pleads with her penitent to return to the ways of wisdom and of peace.

It is then, perhaps, if ever, that, with the Divine blessing upon her efforts, the mother is able to bring home to the mind of her son, a conviction of the necessity of personal religion. He will then have tried the world as it is, followed the bent of his own inclinations, tasted the bitterness of the forbidden fruit, broken over the bounds of his own determination again and again, and proved, beyond all possibility of deception, that he is not sufficient of himself to carry out a single good resolution, or even to escape from misery and degradation. It is then the blessed privilege of the mother at such a time to be able to point to a means of safety, and to lay hold of the previous convictions of her son, to prove that it is the only means.

How many a young man is brought into this situation, who has no kind mother near him to whom he may unburden his heart, it is melancholy to think; and how many at such times, having had recourse to the advice of a spiritual friend, and having formed the

best resolutions for the future, for want of the watchful tenderness of a mother, have been harshly dealt with, treated with contempt, and rudely driven back from their new position, by worldly-minded and irreligious men! How many have wept tears of the sincerest penitence upon the comfortless pillow of a cold lodging, where no female voice was heard to speak in words of consolation or of love! How many have risen from such a couch, and gone forth again to mix in the revelry of strangers, and to forget among scenes of folly and of vice the impressions of the preceding night, because they had no mother to go home to, and to tell of the suffering, which, untold, was more than they felt it possible to endure!

Having felt for her own sons tenderly as a mother, and deeply as a Christian, we need scarcely add, that in the character of the matron of a family, all young men who are brought within the sphere of her influence, ought to feel, that, to a certain extent, they have a mother. Though each may be nothing to her in his individual capacity, though only an occasional visitor, an assistant in her husband's business, or even an apprentice, the young man of whom she thinks so little is possibly the treasure of some fond mother's heart, perhaps the support of a widow, or the only consolation of a neglected wife, or he may hold a responsible situation as being the oldest of a large family whose welfare may depend upon his conduct in life. From such a one, separated from his own kindred, can the mistress of a household, who has herself experienced the anxieties of a parent, withhold that Christian care, and that true feminine sympathy, for which the mother of the befriended youth may have to thank her when they meet, to rejoice over their beloved one's welcome in safety to the shores of the "better land?"

It is often said that women are powerless in forming or directing the opinions of men; but when we contemplate the influence of those Spartan mothers, who, by the operation of united and popular feeling, could make it less dreadful to their sons to die, than to

return home from an inglorious conflict, we cannot doubt that with Christian women is vested a power as influential, and far more holy, than this. We cannot doubt but that Christian women might so exercise this power, as to inspire in the hearts of their sons, a profound and thrilling sense of patriotism, for instance; and if they could be made to prefer the interests of their country, to the indulgence of mere personal gratification, might not the same influence be extended to the religious interests of mankind in general?

It is too much the tendency of men, when they purpose to do good, to confine their attention to the pulling down of evil, to battling with opposition, and correcting abuses by the strong arm; until one would almost think their religion was a system of hostility, and nothing more. It is the part of woman, however, and one of her holiest duties, to endeavor to smooth the asperities of man's nature; and when he comes to her with his fierce party-feelings, his strong prejudices, and his irritated feelings, even against what is wrong, it is the duty of a Christian mother, towards all over whom her influence extends, to point to remoter objects of consideration, so as to lead away from the mere affairs of the moment, to those lasting, true, and unvarying principles which constitute the essential part of a religion truly described as one of peace and love.

Thus by a steady and persevering direction of the minds of young men to principles, rather than to individuals—and, above all, to religion rather than to politics; and by throwing over the whole of her intercourse with the other sex the harmony and beauty of Christian love,—I believe that any mother may establish for herself a sphere of influence, both within and beyond her own immediate family, by which the whole human race, and man in particular, will be benefited beyond the power of human calculation.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE TRAINING OF GIRLS.

THE most striking characteristic of girls as intellectually and morally distinguished from boys, is a quickness of susceptibility, and a consequent versatility of character, which may be either a defect or otherwise, according to the early training to which they are subjected.

It is sometimes spoken of as a defect in women, that they have less power of abstraction than men; and certainly if they were required to take part in all the operations of the other sex, it would be so; but for my own part, I must confess, I never could see it an advantage to any woman, to be capable of abstraction, beyond a certain extent. It may be all very well for a man of science now and then to boil a watch instead of an egg for breakfast; but a woman, I would humbly suggest, has no business to be so far absorbed in any purely intellectual pursuit, as not to know when water is boiling over on the fire.

That susceptibility of feeling, then, which belongs peculiarly to woman, and which renders her liable to a far greater number and variety of impressions than man, that liveliness of interest in all that is passing around her, and that versatility of character by which she so easily adapts herself to every variety of circumstance and situation, are, in reality, the natural peculiarities upon which depend much of the happiness she imparts to others, as well as much of what she herself enjoys. There is, however, considerable danger, lest these peculiarities or propensities of her nature, indulged to a great extent, should dwindle into absolute nothingness; just as the lights and shadows of a picture broken up and divided into minute portions destroy the effect of the whole.

The aim of a mother in the training of her daughters should consequently be, to strengthen their characters, and to fix them on a firm and solid foundation, so that their feelings may branch out and develop them-

selves in endless variety, without depriving the root of its necessary firmness and strength. One part of the process by which girls may be strengthened both in mind and body, consists in allowing them sufficient exercise in the open air; nay, even in inducing them to take advantage of it, for there is a musing listless tendency in some young girls, which ought by all means to be counteracted, and nothing is so effectual in doing this, as the stimulus of healthy and playful exercise. Those women who have known what it was in their childhood to enter into the true spirit and luxury of wild romping, are I believe always the most energetic when called upon to act in affairs of importance; while the musing, quiet, listless little girl, though possibly she may in her early life be more gentle and ladylike than the other, seldom grows up to be so useful and valuable a character.

The artificial habits of the present day, the over-taxing of every means of keeping well with the world in external things, and the over-straining of talent and ability of every kind in the attainment of what is merely ornamental and superficial, have the worst possible effect upon the bodily as well as the mental health of woman; and as one is so intimately connected with the other, it is one of the most important duties of a mother, to aim at the preservation of her daughters from that host of nervous maladies which effectually destroy the happiness, and prevent the usefulness, of so many ladies in the present day.

I believe it is generally allowed that fresh air and exercise restore the general tone of the constitution after it has become weakened, more effectually than any of those medicines of whose infallibility we hear so much; and when we think how much more the mind and the animal spirits are benefited by the former, than the latter prescription, it becomes a matter of astonishment that mothers should not prefer spending the same amount of money in procuring these rather than the other. It is indeed a matter of astonishment, that girls should be so frequently

cooped up in close rooms, scarcely permitted to breathe or walk lest the air should be impregnated with damp, or the ground a little moistened by some passing shower; that they should be forbidden to run, lest they should heat themselves, and thus bring on a delicacy of the chest; should be dressed in such a manner that they have to bear perpetually in mind the spoiling of their clothes; while the little remaining strength they have is supposed to be kept up by patent pills, and tonics of every description. If girls thus trained are to become English wives, and mothers, we have certainly not much to expect in the future prosperity of our country, except so far as relates to the department of medicine.

And here I would observe, in connection with the spoiling of clothes, that one of the most frequent causes of dispute and dissatisfaction in private families, arises out of the habit, so prevalent in the present day, of living in a style beyond our circumstances to maintain; or perhaps, more properly, to the utmost extent of what we can afford. It may seem but a trifling thing to mention among the many serious subjects which occupy our attention in connection with maternal duty; but since the happiness of domestic life is in a great measure made up of little things, I cannot think it out of place to remind the mistresses of families in the middle ranks of life, how much disturbance of temper and distress of mind they subject themselves to, by the habit of having more costly furniture and clothing than they can afford; how often mothers have to check the healthy sports of their children, lest china should be broken, carpets soiled, or dresses rendered unfit for their next exhibition in public; and how often, when an accident has happened, when a costly vase has been demolished, a necklace broken, or a velvet coat destroyed, harsh words have been interchanged by the parties implicated, and reproaches rendered a hundred-fold more bitter, from the secret consciousness of the difficulty with which such wasted money in the first instance was spared, and the still greater

difficulty with which such loss will be restored.

False ideas of happiness I believe to be at the root of half our miseries; and when we think of the vast amount of natural and healthy enjoyment of which children are deprived, in order that they may dress and live genteelly, and of the real suffering they are made to endure, when their buoyant spirits have led them into forgetfulness of the requirements of this gentility; when we think of the sufferings of the mother, too, when she has to tell her care-worn husband, on his return home from a business which is perhaps not covering his expenses, that some two, or ten, or twenty guineas have been wasted by a single fall; when he turns upon her with reproaches for having coveted so costly and unsuitable a treasure; and she retorts upon him again, for an equal amount of money wasted in some other way—when the evening closes with tears on one side, and declarations on the other, that things cannot long go on in this manner, that he must fail, and be sold up, and sent to prison—when such scenes so frequently take place, as we all know they do, from the simple fact of people living habitually beyond their means, an expensive establishment ought to be a source of happiness indeed, to be weighed in the balance against the misery of a single evening spent like this.

It is then to the moral courage of women, and of mothers especially, that we must look for bringing about a better order of things in this respect; for training up their daughters in the first place to be more healthy, in order that they may have stronger nerves, and consequently minds less susceptible of unnecessary suffering. With all the enjoyments of which woman is capable, and we ought thankfully to acknowledge that they are many, she is yet subject to much in this world of an opposite nature—to quite sufficient for her strength and patience, without having super-added those extraneous miseries which arise out of the present artificial state of society. She has enough to do to adapt herself cheerfully to her lot, whatever it may be, to bear

without complaining the trials of a constitution always more or less subject to infirmity, to meet with equal mind the different peculiarities of temper and disposition by which she is surrounded, to console others when herself in distress, to support when depressed and feeble, to sooth when smarting under annoyance, to cheer when cast down, and to inspire hope when despairing—with these, and the thousand other offices of kindness and consideration which it is woman's sacred duty to perform, she has enough to do and to suffer, without being subjected to a host of enemies in that long catalogue of nervous maladies which at once assail the body and the mind.

"If I had been well, I could have borne it," is the frequent and pitiable expression of woman, when she tells of her calamities; and certain it is, that with bodily health she is capable both of acting and enduring to an extent, which on many occasions deserves the name of heroism; while from habitual bodily weakness, and all the personal indulgence it induces, the attention to little things, the interest centred in self, and the constant occupation of mind by the trifling exigencies of the moment, she has, though possessing perhaps the best intentions and feelings, but very little power of rendering herself useful to her fellow-creatures.

I speak not of impossibilities, when I urge this subject upon the attention of mothers. I know that woman is naturally and necessarily weak in comparison with man; and that her lot has been appointed thus by Him who alone knows what is best for us; but I would ask for her, in common kindness, that she should not be rendered weaker than is necessary by an education artificial, unhealthy, and unnatural. I would ask for her a fresh, pure, and invigorating atmosphere, in which she may breathe with freedom, free exercise for her limbs, and occasionally the indulgence of that wild excitement, that thrilling ecstasy, and that unbounded exhilaration of mind and body, which a free and joyous life in the country can best afford. With the same object in view, the

general strengthening of their characters, I would earnestly recommend that girls should often be associated with their brothers in their sports, that they should climb with them the craggy rock, penetrate the forest, and ramble over hill and dale, avoiding only those amusements which to one party produce enjoyment, but to the other torture or death. From these girls should be most scrupulously preserved, for there is cruelty enough existing in the world, from the absence of all thought about it in men; but if women lose the fine edge of their feelings on subjects of this nature, they lose the most beautiful of those characteristics which render them scarcely less lovely, than they are worthy to be admired.

In the study of botany, geology, and many other pursuits of more lasting interest than those which afford amusement only, girls may very properly be associated with their brothers; and happily for woman, in all that belongs to an intense admiration of the beautiful, both in nature and art, she stands at least on an equality with man. Many of these pursuits are carried on with the greatest advantage in the country; and if only for a short portion of every year it is possible for parents to indulge their children with country exercise and air, I believe it may be rendered of lasting and incalculable benefit, by the feelings it will afford them an opportunity of experiencing, and the ideas they will by this means acquire.

What has been said of public schools, with regard to the education of children in general, is most especially applicable to that of girls. More liable than boys to receive impressions from surrounding things, more easily diverted from a straightforward course, less fortified by moral courage, and consequently more tempted to have recourse to artifice, if not to falsehood, in order to escape what they dread, they are at once more exposed to injury and less capable of withstanding it; while many of the reasons which operate powerfully in favor of sending boys to school, have no relation whatever to the formation of the female character. Besides which, the education of a woman, if it be worth any

thing, should be one which would fit her for filling the place and discharging the duties of a woman; and until some new system of school-education shall be adopted, by which girls may be progressively initiated into what will constitute the business of their future lives, the advantages of sending them away from home must be of a very questionable nature, except in the instances already alluded to, where family associations are likely to be injurious.

In support of my own strong feelings on the subject of sending girls to school, I cannot resist the temptation of quoting again from the pages of "Home Education," where the author observes that "Girls should be educated at home, with a constant recollection that their brothers, and the future companions of their lives, are at the same time at school, making certain acquisitions indeed,—dipping into the Greek drama, and the like—but receiving a very partial training of the mind, in the best sense, or perhaps only such a training as chance may direct; and that they will return to their homes, wanting in genuine sentiments, and in the refinement of the heart. Girls, well taught at home, may tacitly compel their brothers to feel, if not to confess, when they return from school, that, although they may have gone some way beyond their sisters in mere scholarship, or in mathematical proficiency, they are actually inferior to them in variety of information, in correctness of taste, and in general maturity of understanding, as well as in propriety of conduct, self-government, in steadiness and elevation of principle, and in force and depth of feeling. With young men of ingenuous tempers, this consciousness of their sisters' superiority in points which every day they will be more willing to deem important, may be turned to the best account, under a discreet parental guidance, and may become the means of the most beneficial reaction in their moral sentiments.

"Parents, therefore, in the education of their daughters at home, will do well to keep in view this double intention in the course they are pursuing; and while bestowing

their cares immediately upon these, recollect that they will have an influence to exert hereafter, such as will make itself felt far beyond its immediate circle."

In proportion as girls are more liable than boys to receive impressions and imbibe notions from those with whom they associate, they derive more benefit from pursuing their studies beneath the care of kind and judicious parents. For that part of education which belongs to the mere acquisition of learning, there are teachers easily to be had; while for that far greater portion which belongs to the formation of character, the mother, where her own example and influence are good, is of all human beings the best fitted. In cultivating a taste for what is refined and beautiful, in the acquisition of general knowledge, as well as in that of easy and agreeable manners, in conversation at once intelligent and unobtrusive, in the practical part of female duty, and in all those graces of mind and person which most embellish the female character, it is impossible to imagine a young girl more advantageously situated than in a well-regulated home, and surrounded by an amiable and well-informed family, where occasional reading aloud from well-selected books, lively instructive conversation, and easy and faithful narrative, constitute the fireside amusements of a social circle. In the midst of such a family, with a mother who can teach her all the beauty of household accomplishments, without any of their vulgarity, a young girl may indeed be said to be fitting herself for a useful and agreeable woman; and the nearer the education of schools can be made to resemble this, the more likely they will be to make young women all which the companions of their future lives would desire.

But how is it so many mothers of domestic habits themselves, complain that their daughters cannot be made to attend to household concerns? and how is it that so many young ladies who do not deny that domestic attention is a duty in woman, still reject with contempt the idea of making themselves useful? Much of this truly culpable absurd-

ity we know to arise out of false notions of refinement, and out of that universal prevalence in the present day, of an anxiety, in the middle classes of society, to adopt the habits of the higher; yet I cannot but suspect, that another secret lies at the root of this evil, which mothers in general appear not to have dreamed of in their philosophy. I allude to the little care which is taken to render the performance of household duties attractive to young people.

There is no reason, that I can imagine, why household duties should not be attractive; why a mother and her daughters, associated for a few hours in the laundry, or even in the kitchen, should not enjoy conversation as pleasant, as when seated in the most elegant drawing-room; nay, rather, I believe the brisk healthy exercise, the natural satisfaction of dispatching business, and the pleasant idea of being useful, are calculated, when combined in this manner, and when enjoyed with congenial companions, to do good both to the bodily health, and the animal spirits; and I would strongly urge upon all mothers to make the experiment, who are afflicted with discontented, over-sensitive, and morbidly miserable daughters.

But how is it, we ask again, that young ladies have such an unconquerable repugnance to this kind of occupation? Shall I be pardoned if I suggest, that many of them have never seen their mothers happy, some have never seen them reasonable, and others still have never seen them good-humored, while engaged in their domestic duties. There is such a thing as toiling on from morning till night, and yet making nobody comfortable,—dusting, washing, brushing, and cleaning, and yet making nobody comfortable,—cooking, broiling, stewing, and steaming, and yet making nobody comfortable,—concocting good things, and yet making nobody comfortable,—laying down carpets, fitting up rooms, stuffing out pillows, smoothing down beds, and yet making nobody comfortable. No; it is this perpetual hurrying, scolding, and grumbling, this absence of peace, and absence of pleasure, which dis-

gusts and deters young women from plunging into a vortex, where the loss of all comfort appears inevitable; and when we look at the anxious expression of these house-devoted slaves, when we hear their weary step, and above all their constant complainings of servants and work-people, when we see how entirely their life is one of tumult and confusion, excluding all calm or intellectual enjoyments, we cannot wonder that young women with any right feeling, or any taste for refinement, should be effectually repelled from all sympathy or association with their mothers' pursuits.

It would be well sometimes, if one might venture on so bold a question, to ask such tumultuous housekeepers, what it is they are really aiming at, in the world of bustle and turmoil which they create? I believe many of them would answer with the most perfect sincerity, that their aim was to make everybody comfortable. Alas! that so vast an amount of labor should ever be undertaken to so little purpose! If they could only be induced to withdraw themselves from the scene of action for a few days, or rather be prevailed upon to sit still, look on, and take no part in the domestic proceedings, I imagine they would be a little surprised to see how incomparably more comfortable everybody would be without their interference, than with it.

Comfort, they would then learn, is not to be purchased by the loss of peace. No; there must be system, there must be order, there must be a well-regulated, as well as a busy household, before the individuals who compose it can be made happy; and therefore it needs both good sense and refinement, both a well-managed temper and a cultivated mind, for the mistress of a house to conduct her domestic affairs in such a manner, as to render the scene of her practical duties in this department one of attraction to her daughters.

Unless a mother is willing and able to associate herself in such pursuits with her daughters, she had almost better allow them to grow up in ignorance of domestic duties

altogether; for such is the danger of young girls associating exclusively with servants, that the benefits derived from a little extra skill in this department, would be purchased at too great a risk. We cannot too carefully preserve young women from all that may endanger a loss of their delicacy and refinement; and if they cannot be domestic without being vulgar, it is a proof that they have not been trained in the right manner to the discharge of their duties, for I am convinced there is nothing in the practical part of domestic economy, necessarily vulgar in itself.

In these, as well as in so many of the duties of women, it is the motive which dignifies the act; and when all unsuitable conversation is avoided, when the reason why every thing is done is rationally and cheerfully explained; when, instead of the ignorant or clumsy method in which servants are accustomed to conduct their household affairs, the mother instructs her daughters how to do every thing with good sense, expertness, and scrupulous nicety; when she enlivens her method of instruction with amusing and well-told anecdotes, or points out the relations of cause and effect in a more philosophical point of view; when she shows how a little deviation from this plan or the other will annoy or occasion inconvenience to others; and how the bestowment of a little more pains, will increase materially the comfort of some member of the family, if not of all; when she pictures the satisfaction exhibited by some well-known countenance, and describes in anticipation the delight of affectionate surprise—when she thus throws a sentiment and a moral into all that is done, we profane one of the most sacred of maternal duties, by calling it either vulgar, or unworthy of our regard.

In the choice of books to be read for the instruction or amusement of her daughters, a mother should be always consulted. A novel read in secret is a dangerous thing; but there are many works of taste and fancy, which, when accompanied by the remarks of a feeling and judicious mother, may be rendered improving to the mind, and beneficial

to the character altogether ; nor is it possible to imagine a scene of much greater enjoyment, than is presented by a thoroughly united and intelligent family, the female members of which are busily at work, while a father or brother reads aloud to them some interesting book approved by the mother, and delighted in by her daughters.

In all the intimacies of friendship, and especially in those lengthy and numerous correspondences into which young women are apt to enter with more feeling than prudence, the mother ought to feel assured that her approbation will be sought for, and that nothing will be really enjoyed, not even the closest and most interesting friendship, in which she does not to some extent participate. It is true she cannot *force* herself into these intimacies, and ought not to assert a claim to do so ; but her whole conduct and behavior towards her daughters, should be such as to inspire a feeling in their hearts, that no enjoyment is complete without her sharing it, or at least giving it her entire sanction. Indeed, without this degree of confidence, which must be voluntary on the part of the young, how is it possible that a mother can really know the whole heart of her daughters ? and without such knowledge, she can exercise but little influence over their moral character.

It is not the manner in which a young woman conducts herself in company, which betrays what is at work in those chambers of imagery, where the imagination and the feelings of youth are apt to dwell ; and often those characters which appear in general society the most hidden, and the most reserved, are struggling hard with under-currents of tumultuous feelings, of which the world has little knowledge or suspicion. But the mother ought not to be strange, like the world, to these operations, which go on in connection as it were with a sort of inner life, and which constitute in reality, the whole happiness or misery of the individual to whom they belong. With this second life, so often hid in the bosom of her child, the mother ought to live ; for here will commence the first awakening of those deep affections, which

lie at the foundation of the whole moral being of woman.

The mother should enjoy the entire and unreserved confidence of her daughters, in all those little affairs of personal calculation which so often gratify the vanity, at the same time that they disturb the peace, of woman ; for just in proportion as her feelings are liable to excitement, and quick to receive impressions ; in proportion as her happiness depends upon others, upon preserving their approbation, or gaining their favor, she is subject to an endless variety of anticipations and regrets, of hopes and disappointments, of joys and of sorrows, to which man is a stranger, and which, from the different elements these varied sensations bring into operation, often render the whole character feeble and valueless, though at the same time it may be composed of little but what is amiable and agreeable in itself.

To prevent their daughters learning to live upon the excitement of the moment, leaning too much upon others for support, seeking too eagerly for approbation or praise, calculating too seriously upon the flattery and attentions they receive, and in short building their happiness too much upon the gratification of their vanity, ought to be the great aim of the mothers of England ; for to grow up with an idea of the supreme desirableness of attracting attention, is a mistake as pitiable as absurd. Yet it is one to which girls of quick feelings are particularly liable ; and even where the attractions of beauty are wanting, the power of riveting attention by amusing anecdote, of exciting applause by the display of accomplishments, or of making themselves conspicuous in almost any other way—in short, of doing any thing to escape the mortification of being overlooked or neglected, are among the most frequent temptations from which a mother ought, by all possible means, to preserve her daughters.

It is often the case with women, that a rapid and acute discrimination, a turn for drollery, and a quick perception of the ridiculous, degenerate into uncharitable satire,

and a desire to excite laughter at the expense of kind feeling. And here, as well as in all other instances of feminine weakness, the preventive process is that to which we look with the greatest confidence of success; for, with a character previously fortified by a strong sense of justice, this temptation will be less likely to gain the mastery; and where the mind is preoccupied with what is more important, the littleness of personal vanity will be less likely to lead astray.

One of the greatest difficulties in attempting to correct the faults of woman, is that so many of them are such as "lean to virtue's side,"—that they are in fact mismanaged or ill-directed peculiarities of character which could not have been destroyed, but by the extinction of her individuality. If ever then the care of a judicious mother is wanted, it is in the opening feelings of a young girl, when branches of the tenderest growth have to be cherished and directed, rather than checked and lopped off. We would not have, for instance, a race of women unsusceptible of praise and blame, reckless of personal attraction, and, above all, insensible to the enjoyment of being beloved. Any mode of training that would deprive woman of her natural feelings, would deprive her of the capability which she holds as her most sacred trust, of being a blessing to her fellow-creatures, and especially to man.

But, blessed be God! there is a foundation upon which the character of woman may safely rest, and which denies not to her the exercise of those peculiar feelings with which she has been endowed, in order that she may with more facility fulfil her divine mission upon earth. It is the religion of Christ Jesus—a religion which binds by gratitude and love: and are not gratitude and love two of the great elements of her spiritual existence? It is a religion which invites her to believe and trust: and is it not her nature to do both? It is a religion which proposes to her a firm support upon which she may lean with safety: and is she not painfully conscious of being insufficient of herself? It is a religion which offers her the shadow of a

mighty rock in a weary land: and is she not a pilgrim faint and feeble, and often wounded and distressed? It is a religion which requires her to visit the fatherless and the widow: and is it not consistent with her natural sympathies to do this? Finally, it is a religion which appeals to her affections, which asks her both to labor and to love, to bear and to forbear, to do and to suffer, for the sake of One who first loved her, and who suffered for her sake: and can there be to woman a more sacred, a more tender, or a more powerful appeal? No; philosophy is not congenial to her nature. It is wholly insufficient to supply her wants, and mere philosophy has ever made shipwreck and ruin of her happiness; but in proportion as she is capable of enjoying and of suffering, and that is to an extent which exceeds all calculation, the religion of the Bible is indeed a revelation of good-tidings to her, opening to her a well-spring of everlasting peace, by which she may sit down in safety, and forget what a scene of suffering this world would be to her, if deprived of the blessed hope which points her affections to another.

This firm foundation of religious faith, it is then the sacred duty of the mother to endeavor, with the Divine blessing, to make the basis of her daughter's moral character: but here again we must remember, that the same peculiarities will appear; for though, by the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit, the heart may be changed in all that relates immediately to everlasting salvation, it is much to be regretted, that a carelessness on some points of moral interest should creep in, perhaps unawares, and blend itself with the life and conduct of some otherwise excellent persons, so as greatly to injure the cause, which they probably feel, at times, as if they would be willing to die to serve.

The influence of fashion has a great deal to do with forming the habits of women; because, from their natural desire to please, and to excite admiration, they are but ill prepared to be, or to appear, what the society with which they associate, and which constitutes the world to them, does not commend

and approve. Hence, so long as their religious duties fall in with the customs and opinions of this world, they go smoothly on; and many (alas! too many) go little further; but when conscience makes the discovery, that the ways even of this little select and reputable world are not exactly right, or rather are not right for them; when, from their peculiar circumstances, they are under a moral obligation to do what this little world never does—what the friends with whom they associate, and who attend the same place of worship with themselves, never do; then comes the struggle, and then most especially do women need the support of moral courage, and of that strong foundation of moral character in general, which can best be laid in childhood, and while under the care of a kind and judicious mother.

To learn willingly and promptly to do whatever is right, simply because it is so, is a great acquisition to any one; but it is most especially so to women, because the first and most natural inquiry with them, when called upon to act in a way different from the common and approved routine of life, is, "What will such and such persons say?" "How grieved such a one will be!" or, "How shocked such another!" and so on, until the very basis of moral conduct comes to be lost sight of, in the consequences which are likely to accrue in a social and worldly point of view.

If I might, without being accused of partiality, venture to speak of the females of one religious body as peculiarly exemplifying my meaning, I should point to the Society of Friends, whose private lives afford so beautiful an illustration of looking directly to the abstract right and wrong of every action they perform. It is true, even these women are often diverted from the main point, by little calculations about hems, and fringes, because great importance is attached to these outward tests by the Society to which they belong; but the habit which is with many of them conscientiously cultivated from early childhood, of simply regarding the right and wrong of every question, and, above all, that

of promptly doing the right thing without regard to consequences, believing that only a just or an upright motive is required in the act, to render it acceptable in the Divine sight, and leaving the results entirely with Him who seeth not as man seeth—these habits, cultivated from earliest childhood, and brought into operation in support of truth, integrity, benevolence, and right feeling of every kind, have rendered the female portion of the Society of Friends peculiarly exempt from the weaknesses and the temptations to which allusion has just been made; and if it were possible for the world in general to be made acquainted with their hidden virtues—perhaps more virtuous because they *are* hidden—I believe there would be found much among them, that would encourage the mothers of England to educate their daughters upon a system, which, while it detracts nothing from the loveliness and the gentleness of female character, places it upon a firmer foundation as regards strong principle, and moral feeling.

The love of a mother, and the beneficial influence she is so capable of exercising over her daughters, ought not to be too much confined to their early years. As they advance in life, this love assumes more of the character of friendship, and is sometimes rendered the most interesting and delightful which can be enjoyed on earth. In the attachments, occupations, and amusements of her daughters, the mother often lives over again the happy days of her own fresh and buoyant youth. Enclosed, as it were, in the home-garden with her daughters, she gradually retires from those active occupations which may in some measure have wasted her early strength; and knowing that nothing can be learned well, which is not practically learned, she sits in privileged comfort, and looks on, while younger and more active performers carry on the operations of domestic duty. She has then the happy consciousness that her daughters really know what belongs to the business of a household, before they are required to carry it on with no mother to direct; and she can point out in what they

have succeeded, or in what they might have done better, before they are exposed to the less gentle criticism of comparative strangers.

In their intercourse with society she is also ever near. By rendering her companionship one of their greatest enjoyments, they learn to esteem it a privilege to have her with them in all their visits, both of duty and enjoyment; and she thus has an opportunity of watching every look, and hearing every word; and it may be, of knowing that all are regulated by that good taste and right feeling, which it has been her constant endeavor to cultivate. Above all, she will have an opportunity of observing, by what behavior their intercourse with the other sex is marked. Girls may be very judicious, and very correct among themselves, and yet very silly when they receive for the first time the flattering attentions of men. How sad it is, then, for a young woman to expose herself to the ridicule of those who know more of the world than she does, and who consequently are better acquainted with the extreme worthlessness of those common-place civilities, which none but the vain or the ignorant can misconstrue into personal compliments!

If ever, in the course of female experience, a mother's protection and advice are necessary, it is at such times; for to witness the foolish practising of ungenerous men upon the credulity of young girls, is as painful as it is humiliating—humiliating to think that the nature of woman should be such as to allow her to believe what is so palpably absurd, and often so grossly insincere; and painful that the weak should thus be taken advantage of by the strong. It is, in fact, a most unfair and cruel trial, to which young girls are subjected on their first entering into society. Warm-hearted, credulous, and perhaps a little vain, the kind attentions of men excite their gratitude, for they seem to set them more at ease with themselves, and to take off the edge of that painful susceptibility, which makes them feel as if they were less interesting and attractive than any one else,

at the same time that they experience a secret and craving desire to be more so. The kind attentions of men are then most gratifying; they begin, while receiving them, to feel that they are not neglected—perhaps they begin to hope that they may be in some slight degree attractive; and if the affair ended here, there would be no great amount of harm to lament; but unfortunately an ungenerous man cares little about the mischief he is doing, and just by way of amusing himself—perhaps by way of ascertaining how foolish a young girl can make herself—he follows up his attentions, which at first were really kind, by a system of flattery so direct, and by attentions so pointed. That the unsophisticated child of nature, over whose ignorance he triumphs, becomes a laughing-stock to her companions, and, more than all, to him.

To imagine a poor girl thus circumstanced, without a mother to watch over her, is melancholy indeed: but what shall we say where the mother is a party concerned in this folly; and where, with worse than folly on her part, she hails the flattering prospect of her daughters becoming distinguished in society, as an omen of their speedy and advantageous settlement in life? It is impossible to express in language strong enough for the occasion, the disgust—nay, the perfect horror—which this manœuvring on the part of mothers naturally excites; and the wonder is, that they do not in all instances—as no doubt they do in a great many—defeat their own ends. The wonder is, that women possessed of even a moderate portion of common sense, cannot see how repulsive it must be to men, to meet in society with young ladies whose parents are anxious to get them off; for how is it possible to suppose, that those girls who are so little wanted or so little valued in their natural homes, could be any desirable acquisition to the home of a husband? On the other hand, the more carefully a young girl is guarded at home, the more tenderly she is cherished, the more highly she is valued, and the greater the sacrifice it would be to her parents to part with her, the more room there is to hope, that she is really estimable in

herself, and calculated to bring a dowry of happiness, as her marriage portion, to the husband of her choice.

If there be one trust more sacred than another to the heart of a mother, it is the delicacy and the purity of her daughters; to shield them from all exposure to unkind remarks, by the most scrupulous care as regards their dress and manners; to keep them from intercourse with those whose feelings are not finely strung, and whose minds are not enlightened or refined; and to preserve them from the sad consequences to woman, of even the slightest deviation from the strict line of propriety in habits and conversation; these are among the sacred duties of a mother, and they are such as no other person can so well perform.

As the love and the care of a mother for her own sons, and the feelings of anxiety which they awaken, naturally lead her to feel a greater interest in young men in general, and especially in those who are placed within the sphere of her influence; so the same feelings on the part of a mother towards her daughters, extend themselves with a kind and matronly protection to all the young females with whom she is brought into intimate association; and knowing what a deep well-spring of affection there is within her own breast, and how much she is capable of doing and suffering for her own children, if she be a kind and generous-hearted woman, she will sympathize in proportion with those young women, who may be separated from their own families, and deprived of a mother's tenderness and care; but especially she will sympathize with the motherless.

And here I must beg to call the attention of the mothers of England to one particular class of women, whose rights and whose sufferings ought to occupy, more than they do, the attention of benevolent Christians. I allude to governesses, and I believe that in this class, taken as a whole, is to be found more refinement of mind, and consequently more susceptibility of feeling, than in any other. That they should be refined, at least to a certain extent, well brought up, and well

educated, are among their necessary qualifications for the office of governess in private families of respectability; and the more cultivation of mind they can throw into the scale of merit, the more delicate, the more accomplished, and the more highly embellished their characters are in every respect, the more they are esteemed in the line of their profession. But is there not another contingent hanging upon the question of qualification?—Are they not in the same proportion liable to suffering?

“But we treat them so well,” say the mothers of England. “We make them exactly like members of our own families; and that is more than can always be expected by young women who have to *go out*.” Here then lies the mischief. It is the habit we have of speaking and thinking of “*going out*” as a degradation, which creates more than half the misery with which it is associated. And why should it be considered a degradation, when the duty of educating the young is universally acknowledged to be the most important which can devolve upon any human being, at the same time that it requires the highest mental attainments? We all know this; and we all know that the governess is often in reality as superior in knowledge, habits, and associations, to the family in which she resides, as the members of that family are to the servants who wait around their table; and yet we all agree, as if by universal consent, to consider it a degradation to go out.

Wherever an opinion prevails which is contrary to reason, a hope may be indulged, though but a faint one, of its being finally overthrown; and thus, though perfectly aware that it is more difficult to alter the current of popular feeling, than to remove mountains, I cannot altogether despair, when I think what the happy results would be, of such an alteration in public opinion, as would permit young women to be industrious rather than dependent, and to employ their time and their talents in providing for themselves without being degraded. There is no help for governesses until this happy change is effected; and it is to the mothers of England alone,

that we can look for so desirable a revolution both in private and social feeling.

When we look around upon society, and see the hundreds of young women who have comparatively nothing to do, in families where their fathers and brothers are over-worked ; when we see how the natural love of occupation directs them to all manner of trifling, and often to expensive and useless pursuits ; when we think how much happier they would be if profitably employed ; and how much better it would be for their parents, and all with whom they are concerned, if they also were bringing in a little money to the general stock ; it is truly astonishing that the prejudices of society should place a barrier betwixt them and those honest and praiseworthy efforts, by which their health, both of body and mind, might be radically improved. I speak not of the aristocracy of our land, of those who are born to rank and affluence, but of the middle class of society—of those who are connected with trade, and dependent upon business for the comforts they enjoy ; and I repeat, it is truly astonishing that such prejudices should exist among them, as to condemn the females of this class so often to suffering, helplessness, and dependence, and, in short, to moral degradation ; for what can more effectually destroy all sense of moral dignity, than to be penniless, powerless, hopeless and unoccupied ?

I have already alluded to those frequent marriages of calculation and interest which are both looked out for, and entered into, under these circumstances ; and were I to trust myself to draw a picture of the result of such marriages, as they operate upon different varieties of character, and upon society in general, I believe I could bring home conviction to the hearts of at least some of the mothers of England ; but time and space, as well as the general nature of this work, forbid that such minute details of individual experience should be exhibited here. It would be more to my present purpose, if mothers could but be brought to believe, that with them rests the power of

turning the current of popular opinion into a more wholesome and beneficial channel—that with them rests the power of making their daughters at once more independent, more useful, and consequently happier than they are.

I allude to the preventive process, which is the only one capable of operating with any efficiency here ; and I would ask in the first place, whether any possible reason can be given, why the daughters of a family, whose sole maintenance is an honest and respectable business, should hold themselves so immeasurably above all contact with it, even in its remotest branches ? It cannot be from want of capacity, when they have had so much of the profits of that business spent upon the cultivation and improvement of their minds. It cannot be from want of health ; or, if it be, this very occupation would be to them the best medicine. And if the business in which their fathers and brothers are engaged, is one in which women cannot with propriety take part, there is a wide field of occupation afforded by others, so that none need be at a loss, if only the degradation could be overcome—if only it could be rendered less agonizing to the nerves of a young lady to “go out.”

But one of the great advantages of this change of public opinion, and one which ought to come home to the feelings of every mother, would accrue to that now unfortunate class of young women, who, from loss of parents, or change of circumstances, are compelled to go out, often having been brought up to expect nothing but indulgence and plenty ; and, above all, after having been educated in the popular belief, that to provide for themselves, is at once a calamity and a degradation. The sufferings of young women thus circumstanced, what pen shall describe ! To some of us, the breaking up of a once happy and honorable home would be sufficient, the uprooting of family interests, the severing of family ties, the actual loss to the heart and the affections ; to say nothing of the over-esteemed indulgences of artificial life. But when we add to these, the frequent-

ly altered behavior of friends and associates to the young woman who has to *seek a situation*, the loss of caste in society, the remarks which every one then feels at liberty to make upon the previous extravagance of her family, the cold reception of strangers, the doubtful position when placed in an unknown household, and the selfishness of those who, in purchasing industry and talent, expect to purchase kindness of feeling, and identity of interest, as well—when we think how little of either is often shown in return, how often the mother who has engaged a governess for her children, expects that governess to listen with untiring interest to her long details of family matters, while she never makes it her business to ascertain whether the governess has or has not a father or a mother; and when in just glancing at this view of the picture, we know that it presents but the surface of the real situation of many a governess; and that deeper sufferings, and annoyances a hundredfold more trying, lie beneath; it becomes a question of Christian benevolence towards those young women who are under the necessity of going out, whether we ought not to do something to stem the tide of popular feeling on this particular point, so as to mitigate the hardships of their lots.

Mothers who have recourse to the assistance of governesses in their families, may certainly do much, by extending towards them something of that maternal care and sympathy which their own children enjoy; and that this is often done with true generosity of feeling, many of those young women who are deprived of the society of their natural protectors have thankfully to acknowledge. But it is not the mere fact of being kindly, or even respectfully treated, at the table of a stranger, which can remedy the evil. There must be a change in public feeling, and a removal of social and individual prejudice on these subjects, before the situation of governesses in general can be rendered any thing but miserable; and it is to mothers only that we can appeal on behalf of their own children, if such a lot should

ever become theirs—and on behalf of the children of other families broken up or dispersed—for commencing with the early training of their daughters, a totally different order of thought and feeling on those subjects; and by qualifying them for the efforts they may have to make, by the early cultivation of moral courage based on the strong foundation of religious principle.

The love of a mother is naturally, and, as it exists in the animal creation, a tender brooding love—a love that brings home, as it were, beneath the parent's wing, and which delights in nothing so much as feeling that the beloved ones are safe, and safe because they are near. But the Christian mother has to look beyond the limits of this narrow and exclusive love, and to throw precisely the same feelings into a far wider field of thought and calculation. She has, in short, to leave herself out of the question of her children's happiness, and to form their characters upon such a basis, as that they shall be as safe when her influence is withdrawn, as when they are immediately beneath her eye. She cannot expect to be always near her daughters, and whether or not they have to share the lot above described, they will in all probability be established in homes, separate, if not distant, from hers, where they will have to act for, and by themselves. To fit them for this, or for whatever may betide in the vicissitude of human affairs, is then her great object; and while she makes them generally useful, and thoroughly initiated in all the business of domestic life, she will see the advantage, too often lost sight of, of bringing them up with the thorough knowledge of some additional art or attainment, by which they may, if required, be able to maintain themselves; but at the same time she must instil into their minds an honorable conviction, that the practice of such an art is far more commendable, and far more conducive to happiness, than the helplessness of mere artificial refinements, or the meanness of voluntary dependence.

In this manner, the mother will provide more effectually for the welfare of her daugh-

ters, than the father who toils to obtain them a fortune ; and when her tender and watchful eye is about to close upon them forever, she will have the satisfaction of leaving them a support to their country, an honor to society, and a blessing to those with whom they may be most intimately associated.

CHAPTER XII.

ON RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE.

ON the subject of religious influence, I do not feel myself called upon to enter at length into a description of that change of heart, without which the mother can have little to hope for in the religious education of her children. Throughout the course of this work, it has appeared to me a duty to throw out occasional hints, in the hope that they may be found useful, even to religious parents, rather than to lay down any specific rule, by which the religious character may be formed. There are other writers to do this, of far higher qualifications than myself ; while it is possible that many things connected with the morals of social life, which strike the eye of the more trifling observer, may entirely escape their notice.

I would not be supposed, however, to glance only with careless indifference at this most essential part of the qualifications of a mother ; because no one can feel more fully persuaded than myself, that it is the only basis of all good morals, and of all good influence ; nor have I even imagined what motives to propose, or what arguments to use, in addressing a mother unconvinced of this great fundamental truth—that without a religious foundation, there is no education worthy of the name. Thus, if I have not directly urged the importance of a change of heart on the part of the mother, it has been because I considered the subject too extensive in its relations, and too profound in its interests, to find an appropriate place in a work of this

description—not because I believed it possible for a mother to train up her child in the way he should go, without being in her own character a consistent Christian.

It is, however, a lamentable fact, that the children of pious parents sometimes deviate widely from the path of wisdom and of peace ; that while strictly guarded from the vices of the world, they sometimes give way to secretly cherished faults ; and sometimes, under the influence of a sort of worldly-righteousness, wear an outward aspect of religion, without possessing its inward and spiritual life.

It becomes then an important question—whether there may not have been some defect on the part of the parents ? It is possible they may have failed in faith, or they may have failed in prayer ; but they may also have failed in the adaptation of means to the end proposed ; they may have failed in knowledge, in consideration, or in common sense, and these are instances which come more immediately under our notice here.

They may have failed from ignorance of the world, and of human nature ; for it is possible to be too guarded, too exclusive, and too strict in their requirements ; because we never can do good by attempting to crush nature ; and it should always be borne in mind, that the work of grace is to operate upon nature, not to extinguish it.

Some parents, again, are extremely solicitous to guard their children from all external harm—from all infection from without ; but are forgetful of the diseases which lurk within the human heart, and which in such cases not unfrequently assume the character of hypocrisy or spiritual pride ; for where a child is scrupulously kept from association with others, from reading their books, and sharing in their amusements, it is perfectly natural that, without great care, it should learn to consider itself too good to be their companion.

Where a child enjoys the privilege of seeing constantly exemplified in its mother's character, the beauty of Christian meekness,

it will be less likely to fall into this error; but where the mother is forward in her religious profession, loud in her condemnation of the world, and quick to judge and to condemn, there is little hope that the characters of her children will be adorned with that pearl beyond all price—a meek and quiet spirit.

There is something too much opposed to meekness in the spirit of the times in which we live; and it is the duty of the mother, among her other calculations, to take into account the peculiar tone of popular feeling, and the tendency of social habits and modes of thinking which prevail throughout the circle in which she moves, in order that her children may be fitted for situations of usefulness in this world, as well as for enjoying the reward of the righteous in the world to come.

I have often had occasion to observe, that the tendency of the present times is to look to obvious display, and immediate results, in every thing we undertake; and in nothing is this more striking, than in our religious duties. There is a great deal of profession; a great deal of going to church and chapel; a great deal of flocking to hear popular preachers; a great deal of dependence upon outward means; a great deal of the hurry and the business of religion, with but little time for the secret examination of the heart; and hence there follows a danger of our coming to consider religion, rather as something performed, than as something experienced; hence also, there follows a degree of indifference with regard to those minor points of domestic morals, which tell for nothing before the world, but which are, in their strictness and conformity to the Divine law, as much the fruits of the Spirit, as the zeal of the missionary, or the public labors of the philanthropist.

It can scarcely be expected of men, that they should pause from those public avocations which so much occupy all classes of society in the present day, to regard these apparently trifling matters; nor indeed have they the peculiar talent, or character of mind,

which would qualify them for minute observation in this sphere of duty; but we do look to women, and to mothers especially, to see that religion is not *performed* in the sanctuary, and praised on the platform, while the world is in reality the household god which presides over the domestic hearth—the world in its fair, and plausible, and reputable character—that world which has kindly come forward and taken religion by the hand, and prophesied smooth things, and said, let us walk to the house of God in company, and take sweet counsel together—that world which, with all its specious promises, its patronage, its fellowship, and its support, is still but the world, and never can be made a substitute for the humbling, heart-searching influence of true and spiritual religion.

Especially the mother must be watchful of her own life and conduct in this respect. It is not merely by talking exclusively about sermons, ministers, or Sunday schools, that a stand can be made against the encroachments of the world to which I allude. Since religious persecution of an open character has been discountenanced by the laws of our land, since it has become respectable—nay, genteel—to be religious, there has existed a very natural tendency to indulge in a kind of religious gossip, essentially worldly in its spirit and character, which with many persons is made to fill up the spare moments of the Sabbath, and is mistaken for suitable and even edifying conversation. I do not say that the subjects alluded to should be excluded from social intercourse. Far from it; for they are subjects which very properly lie near to the heart devoted to the service of its heavenly Master; but there is a worldly manner in which such subjects are sometimes entered into, which dwells only upon the outward and material aspect of religious life, and which has as little relation to the work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating the heart, as if the actual dress and manners of a congregation, met for purposes of worship, were made the theme of a Sabbath day's discourse.

It is for the mother to exemplify by her

whole life, that she drinks at a well of deeper interest in her religious experience—from fountains hewn out of the living rock ; and therefore, when she converses upon the common and familiar topics of the day, it will be with a moral in the general tone and spirit of what she says, which can only be derived from her own habitual communion of soul with the Father of spirits. It is for the mother to mix with her family in all social and domestic avocations, not with a strict and exclusive air of superiority, as if holier than the rest, but as one whose presence is more felt than seen, diffusing an influence of meekness, charity, and peace, while it imparts to every thing that is said and done a tendency to unite, combine, and operate, so as to promote the glory of Him on whose blessing alone she depends for the safety of her children.

It is often the duty of a mother, and one which ought never to be neglected, to give her time and attention to the mere trifles of the moment. Indeed, so pressing are these claims occasionally found, that some well-meaning mothers find no time to go beyond them. There is, however, a scale to be observed in the importance we attach to each department of duty, and on the right adjustment of this scale depends the good influence of a parent. If, for instance, the mother can find time to attend to the fitting and forming of a carpet, and none to listen when a child is anxious to hear about the things of eternity, or if she is interested and indignant about the accidental spoiling of a dress, and evinces but little feeling when a child has resisted any strong temptation, it is evident that, in her hands, the moral scale must be very differently adjusted before she can expect her religious influence to be of much benefit to her children.

There is also a grudging and reluctant manner of giving to the duties of religion their due share of regard, which has a very injurious effect upon the minds of children, for they are quick to observe, not only what is done, but in what spirit we act ; and the peevishness and flurry of temper consequent

upon a late breakfast on the morning of the Sabbath, with the tumultuous preparation of a family for their usual well-dressed appearance at a place of worship, is scarcely to be preferred to the indifference which would allow them all to remain at home. For harsh words are apt to be spoken at such times, and mutual reproaches thrown out among the parties most to blame, while, as a natural consequence, all things go wrong, because there has been no time for preparing them to go right. Perhaps, in the midst of all this, a mockery of family worship is performed, and the child who has just heard its father speak in tones of anger and reproach, has to kneel down and join with him in prayer.

With the mother, then, rests the practical duty of exhibiting, by her own self-denying conduct, her supreme regard for religion, both in her heart and her household. Whoever chooses to be idle or negligent, she must be early prepared ; and as it is much easier to go to church than to give up a selfish inclination, she must convince her children that this sacrifice is not too much for her to make. There may be many motives not altogether pure in themselves, to induce, in the present day, an outward observance of religious duties ; but when the mother of a family, whose whole life is consistent with her Christian profession, rises the earliest in the household, though perhaps in her own frame the weakest ; when she is always prepared in a cheerful and quiet spirit to meet the requirements of the day and hour, though perhaps having more to think of and arrange than any other member of the family ; when she, in her own person, has done her part to remove obstacles and smooth the way, that others may tread more softly on the path of duty ; when she has put away every selfish feeling, and done all this for months and years in the true spirit of Christian and maternal love, I believe it will not be found in the hearts of her children to resist the solemn working of so holy and so powerful an influence.

I have said that the eye of childhood is quick to observe the spirit of what we do, as

well as the acts we perform ; and in nothing is this more evident than in the general service which the Christian is called upon to render to the cause of the Redeemer on earth. That God is love, is at once the most sublime, and the most important truth which can be impressed upon the mind of youth. We all know that this truth is often told ; but how is it exemplified to the credulous and inexperienced ? Alas ! what an amount of dolorous lamentations over sin and sorrow, compared with the real rejoicings which we hear in the mercy and goodness of God, and especially in the means of salvation so freely offered to the sinner ! What threatenings of Divine wrath against the guilty ; what talk about religion, in seasons of distress ; what pointing to that consolation, in the absence of all other ; but what neglect of the same means for sanctifying our enjoyments, by referring them to the great Source of all human happiness !

Sorrow and sin are made powerful instruments in enforcing convictions of religious truth ; but ought not joy to have its share, more especially as vice lays hold of joy as its instrument on every hand ? for how can we expect that the young should be attracted by that which is always associated with gloom, when they see, on the other hand, that its opposite is associated with cheerfulness and mirth ? It is in after life, when we seek a refuge for our grief, when we ask a shelter for our chagrin, and a hiding-place for our tears, that nothing seems so welcome to us as *the shadow of a mighty rock in a weary land*. Youth knows none of these sad yearnings of the heart. The future is bright, and the present full of joy, to those who are just setting out upon the journey of life ; and therefore that which offers them the happiness of a world to come, only as a substitute for the enjoyments of this, cannot be expected to recommend itself to their natural affections.

But what is the joy of a child ? Is it not a beautiful and a holy thing ? and why should it then be associated only with toys and laughter ? The joy of a child is that which the world is too poor to restore, when once

it has been extinguished. It comes directly from the hand of God, so lovely and so pure, that for the brief space of its enjoyment upon earth, it does good to the heart of the weary, and revives the hope of the fainting, by reflecting a light which they know *must* be from heaven, and which they believe to be still shining on, in more perfect refulgence there. The joy of a child is so ecstatic, so self-existent, and so unbounded, that it seems to belong simply to the young fresh life with which its existence commences, and requires little beyond that existence to render it complete. Thus it is perfectly true, that even when deprived of the love and the care of its mother, the child will at times be happy still. It may even laugh, and make merry, in the chamber of sickness where her life is ebbing away—nay, it will sometimes play in the churchyard before the grass has grown upon her grave. But though the mother cannot always create the joy of her child, she may influence and direct it : and though it will at times be happy, whether she makes it so or not, she may use this strong impulse of its nature, so as to lead it to rejoice in what is lovely, good, and kind ; and, as it advances in knowledge and experience, in that which may be associated either immediately or remotely with the Divine nature and attributes.

There is a great difference betwixt rejoicing because of receiving a new toy ; and because of having spent, for the first time, a whole day without being out of temper. There is a great difference betwixt rejoicing because of a holiday ; and because a poor family have been supplied with the comfort of a winter's fire. There is a great difference betwixt rejoicing because invited to a party ; and because permitted to attend in the chamber of a sick relative or friend. The sensations of joy may be equal in all these occasions, but the exciting causes are so different in their nature, as to produce a widely different effect upon the moral feelings. It is thus throughout the whole of human experience. The natural impulse of early youth is to be happy ; but without proper direction, this

impulse may be entirely trifled away, or it may even be expended upon objects which ought never to awaken gladness in the human breast.

From the quick susceptibilities of women and children, and the strong sympathies which exist between a mother and a child, it is not difficult for her to give a powerful and lasting bias to the young minds committed to her care, so as permanently to fix their ideas of attractiveness or repulsion, of beauty or deformity, of happiness or misery, of good or evil; and upon this foundation rests the whole character; for what we admire we naturally aim at, what we love we naturally seek, and what we have learned to regard as essential to our enjoyment, we naturally desire to possess.

Were it possible for any human heart to be so far laid open as to reveal its earliest impressions of that first bias which its simple likings and dislikings received from a mother, what a page would be unfolded for the instruction and benefit of parents! Perhaps, for instance, it might be a feeling of disgust and indignation exhibited against some poor insect, with a triumphing and delight in the power of being able to destroy it; and the same mother might wonder, as her children grew up, that they should be fond of killing animals: she might reason with them, plead with them, and all to no purpose; for the strong impression would have been made by her own countenance and expressions, and though her after reasoning might convince, that impression would remain as vivid as ever.

I have selected this instance, because it was the first which presented itself; but it is only one among thousands of a similar nature, which are daily occurring. I do not say that animals should not be killed, or that children should be taught to shrink with a morbid sensibility from the necessity of destroying them. It is the manner in which such things are done, which conveys the moral to the mind of a child; and wherever there is evidently a feeling of victory, triumph, and joy, associated with the act of

killing, on the part of a mother, her children will be in danger of growing up cruel in their sports, if not pitiless to suffering in general.

Again, we make a serious mistake, when we trust to argument and conviction for effacing impressions which have been made in what, to children, is a much more forcible manner. A child learns to feel, long before it learns to reason. There are innumerable chords of feeling with which its young life is interwoven, which cannot be touched without producing a corresponding impression upon its mind; and thus, wherever a strong bias has been received, it can only be counteracted by a stronger, made through the same medium of sympathies, and their consequent impressions.

To continue the illustration already given, I repeat, that neither argument nor entreaty would have the desired effect, because they would not reach the feelings through the same medium; but an ingenious mother, who had the power of ascertaining from what circumstances in relation to her own conduct the impression had been made, would see that the task was not hopeless, so long as she was able to carry the sympathies of her children along with her. She would, therefore, begin, without any direct reference to the question of cruelty, to interest her children in the habits and characters of animals in general, and when a suitable occasion should offer, she would endeavor to render especially interesting, those of the particular class against which she had exercised a spirit of cruelty. If a woman of philosophic mind, she would probably enlarge upon its natural history, the curious construction of its frame, and its beautiful adaptation to circumstances of climate and food; or if a woman of playful fancy, she would probably rivet the attention, and work upon the feelings of her children, by giving them a little history of its social habits, its enjoyment of home and family, its protection of its young, and the suffering and distress which would ensue from its untimely death; and, in all probability, this method of producing an impression would be found the best.

But we must recur again to the same difficulty ; because we do not and cannot know, exactly, how all the impressions upon the mind of a child are made ; and therefore it is the more important that the mother should be watchful in the extreme, of her own conduct.

Let us take another illustration of the same subject, and suppose that a mother has been most careful in her religious instruction, and even exemplary in her own general habits ; but that there happens with her, as with many, to be one prevailing weakness, which she makes no effort to overcome—it consists in too high an estimate of the wealthy and the great, simply because they are such. Her child who has not learned this lesson of worldly wisdom, is interested in behalf of a poor man, whose conduct has not been altogether correct ; but the mother expresses a degree of righteous indignation against him, which the child is without difficulty made to understand and sympathize in. In the midst of this discussion, a carriage adorned with a coronet stops at the door. A wealthy and titled lady is ushered into the apartment, and received by the mother with every demonstration of admiration and esteem. The usual civilities take place ; and the mother, even after her guest has departed, expatiates with enthusiastic delight upon the graciousness of the interview, and her hope of its being renewed. This titled lady, however, is not more exemplary than the poor man. The child knows it, for her conversation has sufficiently betrayed a worldly or a selfish character ; and the child learns from this lesson, that religion requires a stricter code of morals in the poor, than the rich ; and that a certain degree of laxity of sentiment may pass unquestioned through the world, because it travels with a coach-and-four.

It is possible I may have described rather an extreme case, yet I feel not the less confident, that circumstances of a similar nature are transpiring every day, from which children, and young people generally, imbibe notions, and receive impressions, from our con-

duct, wholly at variance with the principles we are endeavoring to lay down for theirs ; and that it is only by looking narrowly, and with searching eye, into the character of our whole lives—taking the Bible, and not the opinion of the world, not even that of the religious world, for our guide—that we can maintain that high standard of Christian morals, without which religion must ever be an empty name.

And here I must observe, as we all do at different times, and often with humiliation and pain, that there are certain sins, or rather certain faults, which mankind appear to have agreed together to indulge. Selfishness may fairly be classed among these. We hear many sins denounced as heinous, but we seldom hear of a man's Christianity being called in question because he is selfish. The cause is evident. We are all selfish, more or less. We choose to be so, and therefore it is greatly for our interest that this particular sin should be thought little of.

But the Christian mother knows that although the religion of the world may take little cognizance of this fault, or of many others of the same description, the religion of Jesus is as much opposed to what is evil in one form, as in another ; and that it was especially the business of the Saviour while on earth, to denounce those abuses which had crept into society under the sanction of a pretended zeal for the true religion. The Christian mother knows that it is not for man, or woman either, to measure and compute the degrees of evil, so as to calculate what sin may be indulged with the least offence. The righteous law of God admits of no such comparison. Sin is sin wherever it exists ; and we have as much need to pray to be cleansed from secret faults, as from those transgressions which stamp with disgrace our character and name.

Finally, it is good for all who have children committed to their care, to dwell often in their secret thoughts upon the name of mother—upon what it means, upon what it comprehends, and upon the deep feelings with which it is associated. "Take me back to my mo-

ther," is the prayer of the lost child ; and there is an echo to this prayer in the bosom of every wanderer from the ways of virtue, whose mother has been his early guide along the path of righteousness and peace. "I will go, and make confession to my mother," is the impulse of the child who has done wrong ; and that impulse remains the same in after life, when conviction comes home to the alienated heart, and memory brings again the scenes of cherished infancy, with all the tender solicitude, and all the anxious warnings, of an affectionate mother. "My mother would have pitied—my mother would have loved me," is the thought of the orphan sufferer, when the treatment of strangers is repulsive or unkind ; and who shall set limits to this natural yearning of the heart, or say at what stage of experience it will cease to exist ? But again, "My mother will help me," is the exulting exclamation when assailed by the first difficulties of life ; and happy are they, whether children, or more advanced in years, who can fly back to a sheltered home, and claim the assistance of a mother !

But it would be impossible to trace out one by one the various modes, all tender, all endearing, and all calculated to supply the wants of nature, in which the name of mother operates upon the human heart ; and perhaps we understand this best, when we regard her character as a whole—a beautiful and perfect whole ; for I believe it is chiefly in this manner that mankind have been led into the worship of her, who knew not, and assumed not, more than the common nature of a woman. They have been led to seek for something beyond themselves, to which they could appeal—something as human, but far more perfect, and more holy—some being whose eye would look kindly, and whose soul would pity, even when utterly degraded ; who would speak the language of forgiveness, without reproach in its tone ; who would stand between the sinner and his offended God, and plead for him, because of his weakness ; who would not turn away from him on the ground of his many and repeated transgressions ; but would bear with

him because he was human, and beset with temptations—and therefore I repeat, that being directed by nature to look for all this in the character of a mother, the revelation which came to exhibit that which nature demanded, in the person of a Saviour—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who became in all respects like one of us—was rejected as insufficient for the wants of humanity ; and the natural heart went yearning back to deify the humble Mary, simply because she was a woman, and a *mother*.

Let those who mock at this worship think of its deep moral. We learn from the poor heathen, when he bows down to his senseless idol, when he makes confession before it, and atonement to appease its offended majesty, that there is a principle implanted in his nature, which leads him to look beyond himself, and beyond the range of common sympathy, for something by which what is wrong will be condemned, and what is right approved ; but, above all, guilty and ignorant, and debased as he is, he looks for some power or principle from whence a sense of safety, and even of forgiveness, may be derived ; and we read in all this, the natural and often polluted worship of the heart, an imperfect shadowing forth of what human nature in its weakness and its urgent necessity requires. And shall we be less quick to read in the mistaken worship just alluded to, that the name of mother, with all its tender and all its beautiful associations, conveys to the human heart the most perfect realization it is possible to conceive, of all it needs to supply its simple human necessities ?

I have said that the high ideas we attach to the name of mother, depend upon the perfection of her character as a whole ; but by this I do not mean that the mother should be faultless ; because such an assertion would at once defeat the object for which I write. In the religious instruction of her children, the mother will have found it necessary to prepare them not to look for perfection in any human form ; but rather to expect that among the best of human beings there will be faults, while among the worse there will

occasionally be something to commend. She will have taught them, that it is the state of the heart before God, upon which their eternal safety depends ; and as an illustration of this, she will doubtless have directed their attention to the character of David, in whose history is beautifully exemplified the weakness of human nature, with that sincerity of repentance, and that entire reliance upon Divine instruction and support, by which alone the path of safety can be regained after it has once been forsaken.

I have already said that what is done by a mother is of infinite importance to her children, because a single fault indulged on her part, may impart its character to their whole lives, and spread through circle after circle of influence, widening on, and still extending, long after she herself has been gathered to her last earthly home. But since we are all human, and since the brightest examples of earthly excellence are shadowed by some cloud, and obscured by some defect, the mother has no need to be discouraged as regards her religious influence, so long as her heart is right with God ; because there will be a spirit pervading her whole life, to which her children will not be insensible ; and even her very struggles against what is wrong, and her sincere repentance, may be more effectual in their influence upon her children, than if they beheld her in all things perfect ; because they would then have doubts whether she could feel for their trials, and sympathize in their temptations.

Indeed I have often thought, that if religious people in general were more willing than they are to confess, in the true spirit of Christian meekness, wherein they have done wrong, it would be better both for themselves and for those around them. A general, and I believe a very sincere lamentation over their errors and short-comings, we frequently hear ; but it is to be feared that a natural desire to maintain a certain kind of dignity before the world, a dread of their character being sullied by the slightest stain, and the exemption usually conceded to them, from all minute inspection of their habitual con-

duct, beyond a certain boundary-line of consistency, all tend to operate against those free and humble acknowledgments of individual and particular error, which do good in a twofold manner—first, by placing us in the position of being pledged to amend the fault we have confessed ; and secondly, by convincing others that we do not believe ourselves more perfect than we are ; and that, consequently, when we labor with them for their own improvement, it is with no spirit of dictation, as if holier than they.

A character, shrouded from inspection, whose faults are neither confessed by their possessor, nor hinted at by others, is in imminent danger of learning to consider them as no faults at all ; or of continuing to indulge in them, from a belief that they are not obvious to others ; while with regard to the faults which have been confessed, the sincere Christian retains no plea for their continuance—they must be given up, or the sincerity of his desire after a holier life naturally falls under suspicion. It is good, then, even for the deeply experienced Christian, to endeavor to set this hedge about his path ; and it is especially good for the mother of a family, to prove to her children that she is not blind to the defects of her own character, and to convince them of the sincerity of her repentance when she has done wrong, by her faithful and persevering efforts to do better for the future.

By this mode of conduct, I believe that a more intimate union of feeling, and especially of religious feeling, might be established between the mother and her children, than ever can be attained where there is an attempt to appear infallible before the searching eye of youth ; and while the mother exhibits in her own character this strong evidence of Christian meekness, she will draw within the circle of her influence all those relative associations which belong to the real state of human beings upon earth—to the weakness of man, and the forgiveness of God—to the repentance of the sinner, and the mercy on which alone he depends—to the refuge of prayer, and the promises of the Gospel.

The mother would, by this means, more effectually encourage her children in believing that though we have sinned, and come short of the requirements of a just and righteous law, there is a pardon, full and free, offered for the acceptance of all; and that it is not by justifying ourselves in the sight either of man or God, that we can escape condemnation; but by coming, again and again, and not the less because we have erred and strayed from the right way, to weep at the feet of the Saviour, renew our resolutions at the footstool of mercy, and to ask if there is not yet a blessing left for the suppliant, who knows not where else to implore it.

It is scarcely possible to conclude a chapter on a subject of such importance as that of religious influence, without one word addressed to those mothers who have never regarded it as a question of vital moment, whether they had any religious influence or not; but as it may chance that some eye will glance over these pages, which has never learned to look beyond the interests of the present life, I would ask, seriously and affectionately, what is that future for which we are all preparing? Is it the meridian of life? No; that can scarcely be, for hope, in the noontime of existence, is as busy with the human heart as at its early dawn, and the future—still the future is the promised reward of every undertaking—the echo of every aspiration of the soul. Is it then for gray hairs, and old age? No; that is still less probable, for half the occupations in which mankind engage would be useless, if that were the only end at which we aimed. But is it for death and the grave? “Ah! no,” you answer, with a shudder, “we know that death must come, but we banish it from our

thoughts, because we cannot bear to look upon it as the consummation of all we wish, and strive for ‘to attain.’”

Alas! what a melancholy fate is theirs, who live only to sail down the stream of pleasure towards a point of destiny, for which they make it no part of their duty to prepare! But what shall we say when the mother not only hurries along this course herself, but takes along with her the choicest treasure committed to her trust, for whose temporary safety she would almost sacrifice her life?

We can only say, that if all other beings had been reckless of future destiny, we should have looked to the mother, with her natural yearning for the welfare of her child, to have eagerly appropriated those promises of eternal happiness which are set forth in the Gospel, as necessary for her peace of mind in relation to her child, if not to herself; and as the last of many earnest and affectionate appeals, I would urge her once again to implore the protection of Him who alone can effectually shield from danger the motherless and the orphan, and who, when she no longer fills the place of a parent upon earth, can receive her beloved ones into the bosom of eternal rest.

It is for the mother to ponder these things well, and to ask of her own heart whether the conditional offers of everlasting safety which the Gospel holds out, though encouraging, important, and necessary for herself, are not a hundred-fold more valuable, when they bring with them what her tenderest solicitude could never have procured, in the salvation of her child, and in her indissoluble union through all eternity, with those whose affections constituted her happiness on earth.







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